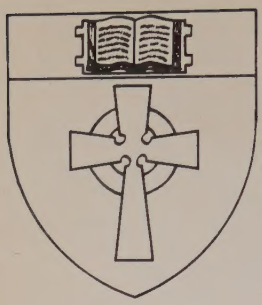
APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION CONSIDERED

RICHARD WHATELY



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APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION CONSIDERED

OR

THE CONSTITUTION OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH ITS POWERS AND MINISTRY

WITH AN APPENDIX OF RECENT ANGLICAN VIEWS ON APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION

BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.

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ON THE

CONSTITUTION OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ITS POWERS AND MINISTRY.

Οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν, ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν Κύριον· ἑαυτοὺς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν.—2 *Cor.* iv. 5.

§ 1. Of all who acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as their Master, 'the Author and Finisher of their Faith,' there are scarcely any who do not agree in regarding Him as the Founder and perpetual Head of a religious *Society* also;—as having instituted and designed for permanent continuance a Community or system of Communities, to which His Disciples here on earth were to belong. The religion He introduced was manifestly designed by Him,—and so understood by His immediate followers,—to be a *social* Religion.[1] It was not merely a revelation of certain truths to be received, and of practical rules to be observed,—it was not a mere system of doctrines and precepts to be embraced by each individual independently of others; and in which his agreement or co-operation with any others would be accidental; as when several men have come to the same conclusions in some Science, or have adopted the same system of Agriculture or of Medicine; but it was to be a *combination* of men who should be 'members of the body of Christ,'—living stones of one Spiritual Temple; 'edifying' (i.e. building up) 'one another in their Faith';—and brethren of one holy Family.

Christianity designed to be a social Religion.

[1] See 'Use and Abuse of Party-feeling': *Bampton Lectures*, Lect. I.

This 'Kingdom of Heaven,' as it is called, which the Lord Jesus established, was proclaimed (i.e. preached)[1] by His forerunner John the Baptist as '*at hand.*' And the same, in this respect, was the preaching of our Lord Himself, and of His Disciples,—first the Twelve, and afterwards the Seventy,—whom He sent out during His ministry on earth. The good tidings they were to proclaim were only of the *approaching* Kingdom of Heaven; it was a joyful *expectation* only that they were commissioned to spread: it was a preparation of men's hearts for the coming of that Kingdom that they were to teach.

But when the personal ministry of Christ came to a close, the Gospel they were thenceforward to preach was the good tidings of that Kingdom not *approaching* merely, but actually *begun*,—of the first Christian Community set on foot,—of a kingdom which their Master had '*appointed* unto them.' Thenceforward, they were not merely to *announce* that Kingdom, but to *establish* it, and invite all men to enroll themselves in it: they were not merely to make known, but to execute, their Master's design, of commencing that Society of which He is the Head, and which He has promised to be with 'always, even unto the end of the world.'[2]

We find Him, accordingly, directing them not only

[1] This word has come to be ordinarily applied to religious *instruction*; from which, however, it is always clearly distinguished in Scripture. It signifies, properly, to *announce* as a *herald*. Our Lord's '*preaching* that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand,' and His *teaching* the People, are always expressed by different words.

[2] It is likely that the Doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer, 'Thine *is* the kingdom, and the power, and the glory' (which all the soundest critics, I believe, are now agreed, does not exist in the best MSS. of the Gospels), was adopted by the Disciples very soon after our Lord's departure from earth. At the time when He first taught the prayer to His Disciples, it would have been premature to speak of the heavenly kingdom in the present tense, as actually established. They were taught to pray for its coming as a thing future. At a later period, it was no less proper to allude to it as already existing; and the prayer for its 'coming' would be, from the circumstances of the case, a prayer for its continued extension and firmer hold on men's hearts.

to 'go into all the world, and preach to every creature,' but further, to 'teach' ('make disciples of,' as in the margin of the Bible) 'all nations'; admitting them as members of the Body of Disciples, by 'baptizing them into[1] the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' Institution of a Christian Society.

Of His design to establish what should be emphatically a Social Religion,—a 'Fellowship,' or 'Communion (i.e. Community) of Saints,' there can be, I think, no doubt in the mind of any reflecting reader of our sacred books. Besides our Lord's general promise of 'coming unto, and dwelling in, *any man* who should love Him and keep His saying,' there is a distinct promise also of an especial presence in any *Assembly*—even of 'two or three—gathered together in His Name.' Besides the general promises made to prayer,—to the prayer of an individual 'in the closet,'—there is a distinct promise also to those who shall '*agree together* touching something they shall ask.' And it is in conformity with His own institution that Christians have, ever since, celebrated what they designate as, emphatically, *the Communion*, by 'meeting together to break bread,' in commemoration of His redemption of His people.

His design, in short, manifestly was to adapt His Religion to the *social* principles of man's nature;[2] and to bind His Disciples, throughout all Ages, to each other, by those ties of mutual attachment, sympathy, and co-operation, which in every human Community and Association, of whatever kind, are found so powerful.

§ 2. Obvious, and indeed trite, as these remarks may

[1] 'In the Name' is a manifest mistranslation, originating, apparently, with the Vulgate Latin, which has 'in nomine.' The preposition, in the original, is not ἐν but εἰς 'into,' or 'to.'

The command to 'baptize into the Name,' etc., is derived (in point of expression) from the language of the Old Testament in several passages; one of which is referred to by the Apostle James (Acts xv. 17), where He speaks of 'all the Gentiles upon whom My Name is called,' etc.

[2] See *Bampton Lectures* for the year 1822, Lect. I.

Properties of a Community.

appear, most persons are apt, I think, not sufficiently to consider what important conclusions result from them;—how much is implied in the constituting of a *Community*. It is worth while, therefore, to pause at this point, and inquire what are the inherent properties and universal character naturally and necessarily belonging to any regularly-constituted Society, as such, for whatever purpose formed. For I think it will appear, on a very simple examination, that several points which have been denied or disregarded by some, and elaborately, but not always satisfactorily maintained by others, arise, as obvious consequences, out of the very intrinsic character,—the universal and necessary description of a regular *community*.[1]

A Community requires Officers, Rules, and power to admit Members.

It seems to belong to the very essence of a Community that it should have—1st, *Officers* of some kind; 2ndly, *Rules* enforced by some kind of penalties; and, 3rdly, some power of admitting and excluding persons as *Members*.

Officers necessary to a Community.

For, 1st, whatever may be the character, and whatever the proposed objects of a regularly-constituted Community, Officers of some kind are essential to it. In whatever manner they may be appointed,—whether by hereditary succession, or by rotation, or by election of any kind,—whatever be the number or titles of them, and whatever the distribution of their functions,—(all which are matters of detail), Officers of some kind every Community *must* have. And these, or some of these, while acting in their proper capacity, *represent* the Community; and are, so far, invested with whatever powers and rights belong to *it;* so that their acts, their rights, their claims, are considered as those of the

[1] I wish it to be understood, once for all, that I all along speak of a 'Society' or 'Community' in the received and customary sense. To apply the term to a Police-force, or to an Army, etc., which are manifestly only *instruments employed by* a Community, would be as great and as uncalled-for an innovation in language as it would be to call the limbs or other *organs* of the animal frame, 'animals.'

whole Body. We speak, *e.g.* indifferently of this or that having been done by the Athenians, the Romans, the Carthaginians; or by the Athenian, the Roman, or Carthaginian *Government*, or *Rulers*.[1] And so also when we speak of the acts of some University, or of the *Governors* of that University, we are using two equivalent expressions.

2ndly. It seems equally essential to every Community that it should have certain Regulations or By-laws, binding on its own Members. And if it be not wholly subjected to the control, and regulated by the directions of some extraneous Power, but is in any degree an *independent* Community, it must so far have power to enact, and abrogate,—to suspend, alter, and restore by-laws for itself; namely, such regulations, extending to matters intrinsically indifferent, as are not at variance with the enactments of any superior authority. The enforcement also of the Regulations of a Community by some kind of Penalties, is evidently implied by the very existence of Regulations. To say of any Community that its Laws are valid and binding on its Members, is to say that the violators of them may justly be visited with Penalties:[2] and to recognise Officers in any Community is to recognise, as among its Laws, submission to those officers while in the exercise of their legitimate functions.

By-laws of a Community binding on its Members.

In the case of *Political* Communities, which is a peculiar one, inasmuch as they necessarily exercise an *absolutely-coercive* power,—the Penalties must be determined according to the wisdom and justice of each Government, and can have no other limit. But in a

[1] And it is to be observed that it makes no difference, as to this point, whether the Governors are *elected by* the governed, and in any degree restrained by them, or are hereditary and unlimited. In all cases, the *established and recognised* Rulers of any Community are considered as *representing* it.

[2] That is, be it observed, Penalties *voluntarily* submitted to by its members, as the condition of their *continuing such*: the ultimate Penalty being *expulsion*; except in the case of a Political Community (a State), which alone has the right of *absolute* compulsion.

purely *voluntary* Community, the *ultimate* Penalty must be expulsion; all others, short of this, being submitted to as the *alternative*. But in every Community, of whatever description (or in those under whose control it is placed) there must reside a power of enacting, enforcing, and remitting, the Penalties by which due submission to its laws and to its officers is to be secured.

Coercive power belongs to Political Communities.

3rdly. Lastly, no less essential to a Community seems to be a power, lodged somewhere, of determining questions of Membership. Whatever may be the claims or qualifications on which that may depend,—nay, even whether the Community be a voluntary Association, or (as is the case with political Communities) one claiming compulsory power,—and whatever may be its purpose—in all cases, the admission to it, or exclusion from it, of each individual, must be determined by some recognised authority.

Admission to Membership of a Community.

Since therefore this point, and also those others above mentioned, seem, naturally and necessarily, to belong to every regular Community,—since it must, in short, consist of regularly constituted *Members*, subject to certain *Rules*, and having certain *Officers*, it follows that whoever directs or sanctions the establishment of a Community (as our Lord certainly did in respect of Christian Churches) must be understood as thereby sanctioning those institutions which belong to the essence of a Community. To recognise a Community as actually having a legitimate existence, or as allowably to be formed, is to recognise it as having *Officers*,—as having *Regulations* enforced by certain Penalties, and as admitting or refusing to admit *Members*.

§ 3. All this, I say, seems to be implied by the very nature of the case. But on purpose, as it should seem, to provide against any misapprehension or uncertainty, our Lord did not stop at the mere general sanction given by Him to the formation of a Christian Community, but He also particularised all the points I have been

Rights Divinely conferred on a Christian Community.

speaking of. He appointed or ordained the first *Officers;* He recognised the power of enacting and abrogating *Rules;* and He gave authority for the admitting of *Members.*

Such is the obvious sense of His directions to His Apostles: obvious, I mean, *to them*, with such habits of thought and of expression as they had, and as He must have known them to have. He must have known well what meaning His words would convey to His own countrymen at that time. But some things which would appear plain and obvious to a Jew—even an unlearned Jew,—in those days, may be such as to require some examination and careful reflection to enable *us*, of a distinct age and country, to apprehend them in the same sense. When, however, we do examine and reflect, we can hardly doubt, I think—considering to whom, and at what time, He was speaking—that our Lord did sanction and enjoin the formation of a permanent religious Community or Communities, possessing all those powers which have been above alluded to.

Power to bind and loose, power of the keys, and power of remission of sins.

The power of 'binding and loosing;'—i.e. enacting and enforcing, and of abrogating or suspending regulations for a Christian Society,—was recognised by His promise of the *Divine ratification* of those acts,—the 'binding and loosing in Heaven.' The 'Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,' denote the power of admitting persons Members of the Church, and excluding them from it. And the expression respecting the 'remitting and retaining of sins,' if it is to be understood (as I think it is) as extending to anything beyond the power of admitting members into Christ's Church, by 'Baptism for the remission of sins,' must relate to the enforcement or remission of *ecclesiastical* censures for offences against a Christian Community.

By attentive reflection on the two topics I have here suggested—namely, on the rights and powers essentially inherent in a Community, and consequently implied in the very institution of a Community, so far as they are not expressly excluded; and again, on the declarations

of our Lord, as they must have been understood by His Disciples,—by reflection, I say, on these two topics, we shall be enabled, I think, to simplify and clear up several questions which have been sometimes involved in much artificial obscurity and difficulty.

§ 4. And our view of the sense in which our Lord's directions are to be understood will be the more clear and decided if we reflect that all the circumstances which have been noticed as naturally pertaining to every Community are to be found *in that religious Community in which the Disciples had been brought up*;—the Jewish Church, or (as it is called in the Old Testament) the 'Congregation,' or Ecclesia,[1] of which each Synagogue was a branch.[2] It had regular *Officers*;—the Elders or Presbyters, the Rulers of Synagogues, Ministers or Deacons, etc.—it had By-laws; being not only under the Levitical Law, but also having authority, within certain limits, of *making* Regulations, and enforcing them by Penalties (among others, that which we find alluded to in the New Testament, of excommunicating or 'casting out of the Synagogue'): and it had power to admit Proselytes.

Constitution of the Jewish Church.

With all these points, then, the Disciples of Jesus had long been familiar. And He spoke of them in terms with which they must have been well acquainted. For instance, the expression 'binding and loosing'[3] was, and still is, perfectly familiar to the Jews, in the sense of enforcing and abrogating rules; or,—which amounts precisely to the same thing,—deciding as to the manner, and the extent, in which a previously existing law is to be considered as binding: as is done by our judges in their recorded decisions.

Rights exercised by the Jewish Church familiar to the Disciples.

[1] Septuagint.

[2] See Vitringa *On the Synagogue*, of which an excellent abridged translation by the Rev. J. Bernard has appeared.

[3] See Lightfoot on this subject, and also Dr. Wotton's valuable work *On the Mishna*.

The Jewish Church was indeed subject, by Divine authority, to the Levitical Law. But minute as were the directions of that Law, there were still many points of detail, connected with the observance of it, which required to be settled by some competent authority: such as, for instance, what was, or was not, to be regarded as 'work,' forbidden on the Sabbath:—what was to be considered as 'servile work,' forbidden on certain other days;—and in what way the injunctions respecting their food, their garments, the sowing of their fields, and several other matters, were to be observed.[1]

In regard to regulations of this kind, our Lord recognises the authority of the Jewish Rulers as being so far successors of Moses; for He tells His hearers, 'The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe, and do.' And though He adds a caution not to 'do after their works, for they say, and do not,' He does not teach that their personal demerits, or even the gross abuse of their power, which He so strongly reprobates, could invalidate the legitimate exercise of that power. Indeed, since there is hardly any human Government that has not, at some time or other, abused, more or less, the power entrusted to it, to deny on that ground all claims whatever to submission would be the very principle of anarchy.

Authority of Jewish Rulers recognised by Christ.

The Jewish Rulers went beyond their proper province, when, instead of merely making such regulations as were necessary with a view to the due observance of the Mosaic Law, they superadded, on the authority of their supposed Tradition, commandments foreign to that Law; and, still more, evasions of the spirit of it.[2]

Abuse of power by Jewish Rulers.

Jesus accordingly censures them severely, as 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men'; and again,

[1] Those who can procure, or gain access to Dr. Wotton's *Selections from the Mishna*, will find in it much curious and interesting information relative to these and several other particulars, which throws great light on many passages of the New Testament.

[2] See Wotton *On the Mishna*.

as 'making the Word of God of none effect, by their Tradition.' But still He distinctly recognises their legitimate authority in making such regulations as were necessarily left to their determination.

§ 5. And His Disciples, therefore, who heard *both* of these His declarations, could not have been at any loss to understand what He meant by giving to themselves, and the succeeding Officers of a Christian Church, the power to 'bind and loose.' He charged them to 'teach every one to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them'; promising to be 'with them always, even to the end of the world'; and He also gave them the power of 'binding and loosing'; saying, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven' (i.e. ratified by the Divine sanction); 'and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.'

How the Disciples would understand the Commission given them.

They would of course understand by this, not that they, or any of their successors, could have authority to dispense with their Master's commandments—to add to or alter the terms of Gospel salvation,—to teach them, in short, *not* to 'observe what He had commanded them,'—but to enact, from time to time, to alter, to abrogate, or to restore, regulations respecting matters of detail, not expressly determined in Scripture, but which yet *must* be determined in some way or other, with a view to the good order of the Community, and the furtherance of its great objects.

Power to make regulations.

So, also, we cannot suppose they would even suspect that they, or any mortal *man*, can have 'power to forgive sins,' *as against God*;—that a *man* could be authorised either to absolve the *im*penitent, or to shut out from Divine mercy the penitent; or, again, to read the heart, so as to distinguish between the two, without an express inspiration in each particular case.

Power of remitting sins.

And this express inspiration in particular cases, what-

ever may have been their original expectations, they must soon have learnt they were *not* always to look for. They were to use their best discretion,—to exercise due caution, in guarding against the admission of 'false brethren,' 'deceitful workers,'—hypocritical pretenders to Christian faith and purity;—but they had not, universally at least, any supernatural safeguard against such hypocrisy.

Power of reading all men's hearts not given.

The example of Simon Magus would alone show this, even if there were no others to be found. He was, we find, baptized along with the other Samaritans (Acts viii. 13), professing, as of course he must have done, sincere repentance, and devotion to Christ: and yet the Apostles find him, after this, to be still 'in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.'[1]

But still the Gospel of good tidings which they were authorised and enjoined to proclaim, being most especially tidings of 'remission of sins' to all who should accept the invitation made to them by the preachers of that Gospel, they might properly be said to 'remit' or 'retain' according as they admitted to Baptism the attentive and professedly-penitent and believing hearers, and left out of the number of the subjects of Christ's kingdom those who neglected or opposed Him.[2] 'Repent and be baptized every one of you *for the remission of sins*,' is accordingly the kind of language in which they invite their hearers everywhere to join the Body of their Master's People; and yet it is certain the remission of sins was *conditional only*, and dependent on

[1] Acts viii. 21.

[2] Of course, if there had been a distinct Divine appointment of such a sacrament as that of penance, as it is called (including private Confession and priestly Absolution), we should have been found to regard *that* in the same light as we do the sacraments of Baptism and of the Eucharist. Without presuming to set limits to the Divine favour, we feel bound to resort to, and to administer, these, as appointed means of grace. And if again there had *not* been that Divine appointment of those sacraments, a Church would have no more authority to confer on *them* a sacramental character, than on the pretended sacrament of Penance.

a condition of which they—the Apostles themselves—had no infallible knowledge; the condition being, the real sincerity of that penitence and faith which the converts *appeared* and *professed* to have.

A Community may pardon offences against itself.

§ 6. But although this is the only sense in which the Apostles, or, of course, any of their successors in the Christian ministry, can be empowered to 'forgive sins' *as against God;* i.e. though they can only pronounce and proclaim *His* forgiveness of all those who come to Him through Christ, and assure each individual of his acceptance with God, *supposing* him to be one of 'those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe,' yet offences *as against a Community* may, it is plain, be pardoned, or pardon for them withheld, *by* that Community, or by those its officers who duly represent it.[1]

Penalties for Ecclesiastical offences.

Whether our Lord intended, in what He said of 'remitting and retaining sins,' to include (as seems to me the probable supposition) this power of inflicting or removing *ecclesiastical censures* for transgressions of the regulations of a Society, we may be perhaps not authorised positively to conclude; but at any rate, such a power is *inherent* necessarily in every Community, so far as not expressly reserved for some superior jurisdiction: *regulations* of some sort or other, and consequently *enforcement* of those regulations by some kind of penalties, being essential to a Community, and implied in the very nature of it.

Different views of the same act, as a Sin and as a Crime.

But what leads to confusion of thought in some minds, is, that the same action may often have two distinct characters, according to the light in which it is viewed: whether as a *sin*[2] against God, or as a *crime* in reference to the Community; and hence they are sometimes led to confound together the pardoning of the *crime*—the *offence* against the Community—with the pardoning

[1] See *Lessons on the History of Religious Worship*, l. v., § 6.
[2] See Warburton's *Div. Leg.*

of the *sin*. Now the regularly-appointed Ministers—the Officers of a Community—may be authorised to enforce or remit penalties against the ecclesiastical offence—the crime,—in reference to the Community: and may pronounce an *absolute* and complete pardon of a particular offender, for a particular act, on his making the requisite submission and reparation, and appearing outwardly, as far as Man can judge, a proper subject for such pardon. And we are commanded to 'forgive one another'; namely, offences against *ourselves*. But the pardon of sin as against God must *be conditional* on that hearty inward repentance, of which, in each case, God only, or those to whom He may impart the knowledge, can adequately judge.

When Paul says to the Corinthians in reference[1] to that member of their Church who had caused a scandal by his offence, 'To whomsoever ye forgive anything, I forgive it also,' though I am far from saying that the offender's sin against God was *not* pardoned, it is quite plain *this* is not what the Apostle is here speaking of. He is speaking of a case in which they and he were not merely to *announce*, but to *bestow* forgiveness. They were to receive back the offender who had scandalised the Society, into the bosom of that Society, on his professing with sincerity, or rather *apparent* sincerity (for of that alone they could be judges) his contrition. They would of course—as believing those his professions—cherish a confident hope that his sin against God was pardoned. But doubtless they did not pretend either to an omniscient discernment of his sincerity, or to the power either of granting Divine pardon to the impenitent, or of excluding from God's mercy the repentant sinner.

§ 7. Then again, with respect to the 'Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven' which our Lord promised (Matt. xvi. 19) to give to Peter,[2] the Apostles could not, I conceive, doubt that He was fulfilling

Power of the Keys.

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 10.

[2] There seems good reason to believe,—though it would be most unwarrantable to make it an article of faith,—that Peter really was

that promise to Peter and to the rest of them conjointly, when He 'appointed unto them a Kingdom,' and when, on the day of Pentecost, He began the building of His Church, and enabled them, with Peter as their leader and chief spokesman, to open a door for the entrance of about three thousand converts at once; who received daily accessions to their number. The Apostles, and those commissioned by them, had the office of granting admission into the Society, from time to time, to such as they judged qualified.[1]

Christian Church the Kingdom of Heaven.

And that this Society, or Church, was that 'Kingdom of Heaven' of which the keys were committed to Peter, and which the Apostles had before proclaimed as 'at hand,' they could not doubt. They could not have been in any danger of

the chief of the Apostles: not, certainly, in the sense of exercising any supremacy and absolute control over them,—as dictating to their consciences,—as finally deciding all cases of doubt,—or as claiming any right to interfere in the Churches other Apostles had founded (see Gal. ii. 7-9 and 11-14), but as the chief in dignity; taking precedence of the rest, and acting as President, Chairman, or Speaker in their meetings. Peter, and James, and John, and sometimes Peter and James—always with Peter placed foremost—were certainly distinguished (as appears from numerous passages in the Gospels) from the rest of the Apostles. He was apparently the chief spokesman on the day of Pentecost, when the *Jewish* Believers were first called on to unite themselves into a Church; and he was the chosen instrument in founding the first Church of the ('devout') *Gentiles;* opening the door of the Kingdom of Heaven to Cornelius and his friends.

I need hardly add, that to claim on that account for Peter's supposed *successors* such supreme jurisdiction over the whole Church-universal as he himself neither exercised nor claimed, would be most extravagant. Moreover, since whatever pre-eminence he did possess, was, confessedly, not conferred on him *as* Bishop of Rome, his supposed successors in that See cannot manifestly have any claim to *that* pre-eminence; any more than the successors of King William the Third, in the office of Stadtholder, could claim the English throne. And to speak of a *succession* of men as being, each, a *foundation* on which the Church is built, is not only extravagant but unmeaning. [See *Lectures on the Apostles.*]

[1] σωζομένους, rendered in our version 'such as should be saved'; by which our translators probably meant, according to the idiom of their day (which is the true sense of the original), 'persons entering on the road of salvation.'

cherishing any such presumptuous dream, as that they or any one else, except their Divine Master, could have power to give or refuse admittance to the mansions of immortal bliss.[1]

On the whole, then, one who reads the Scriptures with attention and with candour will be at no loss, I conceive, to ascertain what was the sense, generally, in which our Lord's Disciples would understand His directions and injunctions. Besides what is implied, naturally and necessarily, in the very institution of a Community, we know also what the instructions were which the Disciples had already been accustomed to receive from their Master, and what was the sense they had been used from childhood to attach to the expressions He employed. And as we may be sure, I think, how *they* would understand His words, so we may be equally sure that He would not have *failed to undeceive* them, had they mistaken His real meaning; which therefore, we cannot doubt, must have been that which these Disciples apprehended.

§ 8. As for the mode in which the Apostles and other early Christian Ministers carried into effect the directions they had received, we have indeed but a few, and those generally scanty and incidental, notices in the sacred writers; but all the notices we do find go to confirm—if confirmation could be wanted—what has been just said, as to the sense in which our Lord must have been understood—and, consequently, in which He must have *meant* to be understood—by His Disciples.

Procedure of the Disciples in conformity to their Master's directions.

And among the important facts which we can collect and fully ascertain from the sacred historians, scanty and irregular and imperfect as are their records of particulars, one of the most important is *that very scantiness*

[1] 'He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth' (Rev. iii. 7), is the Lord.

and incompleteness in the detail—that absence of any full and systematic description of the formation and regulation of Christian Communities, that has been just noticed. For we may plainly infer, from this very circumstance, the design of the Holy Spirit, that those details, concerning which no precise directions, accompanied with strict injunctions, are to be found in Scripture, were meant to be left to the regulation of each Church, in each Age and Country. On any point in which it was designed that all Christians should be, everywhere, and at all times, bound as strictly as the Jews were by the Levitical Law, we may fairly conclude they would have received directions no less precise, and descriptions no less minute, than had been afforded to the Jews.

Importance of noticing the omissions in any work.

It has often occurred to my mind that the generality of even studious readers are apt, for want of sufficient reflection, to fail of drawing such important inferences as they often might, from the *omissions* occurring in any work they are perusing; from its *not* containing such and such things relative to the subject treated of. There are many cases in which the non-insertion of some particulars which, under other circumstances, we might have calculated on meeting with in a certain book, will be hardly less instructive than the things we do meet with.

And this is much more especially the case when we are studying works which we believe to have been composed under Divine guidance. For, in the case of mere human compositions, one may conceive an author to have left out some important circumstances, either through error of judgment, or inadvertency, or from having written merely for the use of a particular class of readers in his own time and country, without any thought of what might be necessary information for persons at a distance and in after ages; but we cannot, of course, attribute to any *such* causes omissions in the *inspired* Writers.

On no supposition whatever can we account for the omission, by all of them, of many points which they do omit, and of their scanty and slight mention of others, except by considering them as withheld by the express design and will (*whether communicated* to each of them or not) of their Heavenly Master, restraining them from committing to writing many things which, naturally, some or other of them at least would not have failed so to record.

The Sacred Writers supernaturally withheld from recording some things.

I have set forth accordingly, in a distinct Treatise, these views respecting the *Omissions* in the Sacred Books of the New Testament, and the important inferences thence to be deduced. We seek in vain there for many things which, humanly speaking, we should have most surely calculated on finding. 'No such thing is to be found in our Scriptures as a Catechism, or regular *Elementary Introduction* to the Christian Religion; nor do they furnish us with anything of the nature of a systematic Creed, set of Articles, Confession of Faith, or by whatever other name one may designate a regular complete Compendium of Christian doctrines; nor again, do they supply us with a Liturgy for ordinary Public Worship, or with Forms for administering the Sacraments, or for conferring Holy Orders; nor do they even give any precise *directions* as to these and other ecclesiastical matters; anything that at all corresponds to a Rubric or set of Canons.'

Now these omissions present, as I have in that Treatise endeavoured to show, a complete moral demonstration that the Apostles and their followers must have been *supernaturally withheld* from recording great part of the institutions, instructions, and regulations, which must in point of fact have proceeded from them; withheld *on purpose* that other Churches, in other Ages and Regions, might not be led to consider themselves bound to adhere to several formularies, customs, and rules, that were of local and temporary appointment, but might be left to their own discretion in matters in which it seemed best to Divine wisdom that they should be so left.

§ 9. With respect to one class of those points that have been alluded to, it is probable that one cause—humanly speaking—why we find in the sacred books less information concerning the Christian ministry and the Constitution of Church-Governments than we otherwise might have found, is that these institutions had less of *novelty* than some would at first sight suppose, and that many portions of them did not wholly originate with the Apostles. It appears highly probable—I might say morally certain—that wherever a Jewish Synagogue existed that was brought, the whole or the chief part of it, to embrace the Gospel, the Apostles did not there so much *form* a Christian Church (or Congregation,[1] Ecclesia), as *make an existing Congregation Christian;* by introducing the Christian Sacraments and Worship, and establishing whatever regulations were requisite for the newly-adopted faith, leaving the machinery (if I may so speak) of government unchanged; the rulers of Synagogues, Elders and other Officers (whether spiritual or ecclesiastical, or both), being already provided in the existing institutions. And it is likely that several of the earliest Christian Churches did originate in this way; that is, that they were *converted Synagogues*, which *became* Christian Churches as soon as the members, or the main part of the members, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah.

Christian Churches derived from Synagogues.

The Apostles, we know, acted on the rule of 'becoming all things to all men'; that is, of complying with men's habits, and avoiding all shock to their feelings, as far as this could be done without any sacrifice of principle, or detriment to the great objects proposed. It is incredible, therefore, especially

Compliance with existing usages.

[1] The word '*Congregation*,' as it stands in our version of the Old Testament (and it is one of very frequent occurrence in the Books of Moses), is found to correspond, in the Septuagint, which was familiar to the New Testament writers, to Ecclesia; the word which, in our version of these last, is always rendered—not 'Congregation,' but '*Church*.' This, or its equivalent 'Kirk,' is probably no other than 'circle'; i.e. Assembly, Ecclesia. In James (ch. ii. ver. 2), 'Synagogue' is the word he uses for a Christian assembly.

considering that for several years the only converts were persons frequenting the Synagogues—Jews or 'devout Gentiles'—that they should have utterly disregarded all the existing and long-reverenced institutions and offices, which could so easily be accommodated to the new dispensation. To have established everything on a perfectly new system, through mere love of novelty —to have erected, as it were, a fresh building from the very ground, when there was one standing which with small and easy alterations would answer all the same purposes, would have been to raise up wantonly difficulties and obstacles to their own success. They did not indeed, no doubt, think themselves bound, or authorised, to adhere blindly to existing institutions in any points in which these were at variance with the spirit of the Gospel, or were capable of being changed for the better: and doubtless they introduced from time to time (and designed that their successors should do the same) such alterations in the functions of the several officers, and in all regulations respecting other non-essential points, as circumstances of time and place might require. But we cannot suppose that they aimed at originality for its own sake, or altered for the sake of altering. And the correspondence accordingly which has been traced by learned men between the Synagogue and the Church,[1] is no more than what we might antecedently have expected.

Precedence allowed to the Jews.

The attempt to effect this conversion of a Jewish Synagogue into a Christian Church, seems always to have been made, in the first instance, in every place where there was an opening for *it*. Even after the call of the idolatrous Gentiles, it appears plainly to have been the practice of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas,[2] when they came to any

[1] See Bernard's *Vitringa*.

[2] These were the first who were employed in converting the *idolatrous* Gentiles to Christianity (see Barrington's *Miscellanea Sacra*); and that their first considerable harvest among these was at Antioch in Pisidia, may be seen by any one who attentively reads the 13th chapter of Acts. Peter was sent to Cornelius, a '*devout*'

city in which there was a Synagogue, to go thither first and deliver their sacred message to the Jews and 'devout (or proselyte) Gentiles';—according to their own expression (Acts xiii. 16), to the 'men of Israel and those *that feared* God'; adding, that 'it was necessary that the Word of God should first be preached to them.'

And when they founded a Church in any of those cities in which (and such were, probably, a very large majority) there was no Jewish Synagogue that received the Gospel, it is likely they would still conform, in a great measure, to the same model.

New directions needed even for converted Synagogues.

But though, as has been said, the circumstance just mentioned was probably the cause—humanly speaking—why some particulars are not recorded in our existing Sacred Books, which otherwise we might have found there, still, it does seem to me perfectly incredible on any supposition but that of supernatural interference, that neither the Apostles nor any of their many followers should have committed to writing any of the multitude of particulars which we do *not* find in Scripture, and concerning which we are perfectly certain the Apostles did give instructions, relative to Church-Government, the Christian Ministry, and Public-Worship. When we consider how large a proportion of the Churches and of the ministers were Gentiles, and strangers to the constitution of Jewish Synagogues, and also how much was introduced that was new and strange, even to Jewish Christians (as well as highly important) — the Christian Sacraments being wholly new, and the prayers in a great measure so,—we may judge how great a number of particular directions must have been indis-

Gentile;—one of those who had renounced idolatry and frequented the Synagogues. And these seem to have been regarded by him as in an especial manner his particular charge. His Epistles appear to have been addressed to them; as may be seen both by the general tenor of his expressions (as remarked in Dr. Hinds's *History*, vol. ii.) and especially in the opening address; which is not (as would appear from our Version) to the dispersed *Jews*, but to the 'Sojourners of the dispersion,' *παρεπιδήμους διασπορᾶς*, i.e. the *devout Gentiles living among the* 'Dispersion.'

pensably necessary for all;—directions which it would have been natural, humanly speaking, for the Apostles or their attendants to have recorded in writing; and which, if this had not been done, would naturally have been so recorded by the persons to whom they were delivered. 'Suppose we could make out the possibility or probability of Paul's having left no Creed, Catechism, or Canons, why have we none from the pen of Luke or of Mark? Suppose this also explained, why did not John or Peter supply the deficiency? And why again did none of the numerous Bishops and Presbyters whom they ordained undertake the work under their direction?'[1] 'And that there is nothing in the Christian Religion, considered in itself, that stands in the way of such a procedure, is plain from the number of works of this description which have appeared from the earliest times (*after the age of inspiration*) down to the present;—from the writings entitled the "Apostles' Creed," and the "Apostolical Constitutions," etc. (compositions of uncertain authors, and, amidst the variety of opinions respecting them, never regarded as Scripture), down to the modern Formularies and Confessions of Faith. Nor again can it be said that there was anything in the *founders* of the religion, any more than in the religion itself, which, humanly speaking, should seem likely to preclude them from transmitting to us such compositions. On the contrary, the Apostles, and the rest of the earlier preachers of Christianity, were brought up Jews; accustomed in their earliest notions of religion to refer to the Books of the Law, as containing precise statements of their Belief, and most minute directions as to religious Worship and Ceremonies. 'So that to give complete and regular instructions as to the character and the requisitions of the new Religion, as it would have been natural for any one, was more especially to be expected of these men.'[2]

We are left then, and indeed unavoidably led, to the conclusion that, in respect of these points, the Apostles

[1] *Essay on Omissions*, p. 19. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.

and their followers were, during the age of inspiration, *supernaturally withheld* from recording those circumstantial details which were not intended by Divine Providence to be absolutely binding on all Churches, in every Age and Country, but were meant to be left to the discretion of each particular Church.

§ 10. The absence of such detailed descriptions and instructions as I have been adverting to, is the more striking when contrasted with the earnest and frequent inculcations we do meet with, of the great fundamental Gospel-doctrines and moral duties, which are dwelt upon in so many passages, both generally and in reference to various classes of persons, and various occasions. Our sacred writers have not recorded their Creeds,—their Catechisms for the elementary instruction of converts,—their forms of Public Prayer and Psalmody,—or their modes of administering the Sacraments; or whether either or both of them should be, or usually were, administered by Presbyters exclusively:—they have not even described the posture in which the Eucharist was received, or the use of leavened or unleavened Bread (two points on which, in after ages, bitter controversies were raised), nor many other things which we are certain Paul (as well as the other Apostles) 'set in order when he came' to each Church.

Scanty records of what relates to Church-government and copious of moral and doctrinal instructions.

But, on the other hand, it is plainly recorded that they did establish Churches wherever they introduced the Gospel; that they 'ordained Elders in every city,' and that the Apostles again delegated to others that office of ordaining; that they did administer the rite of Baptism to their converts, and that they celebrated the Communion of the Lord's Supper.[1] And besides the general principles of Christian Faith and

Clear records of the fact that Christian Churches were founded.

[1] One very remarkable circumstance is, that they have nowhere laid down any injunction as to the *exclusive administration of these Sacraments* by the *Ministers*. It is indeed quite natural,—and ac-

Morality which they sedulously set forth, they have recorded the most earnest exhortations to avoid 'confusion'[1] in their public worship; to do 'all things decently and in order'; to 'let all things be done to edifying,' and not for vain-glorious display; they inculcate the duty of Christians 'assembling themselves together' for joint worship;[2] they record distinctly the solemn sanction given to a Christian Community; they inculcate[3] due reverence and obedience to those that 'bear rule' in such a Community, with censure of such as 'walk disorderly' and 'cause divisions'; and they dwell earnestly on the care with which Christian ministers, both male and female, should be selected, and on the zeal, and discretion, and blameless life required in them, and on their solemn obligation to 'exhort, rebuke, and admonish'; yet with all this they do not record even the number of distinct Orders of them, or the functions appropriated to each, or the degree, and kind, and mode, of control they exercised in the Churches.

While the *principles*, in short, are clearly recognised, and strongly inculcated, which Christian Communities and individual members of them are to keep in mind and act upon, with a view to the great objects for which these Communities were established, the *precise modes* in which these objects are, in each case, to be promoted, are left—one can hardly doubt, studiously left—undefined.

Principles which are to guide Christian Societies clearly recorded.

§ 11. Many of the omissions I have alluded to will appear even the more striking in proportion as we con-

cordingly appears to have been the original and universal custom—that the most prominent part in the celebration of Christian rites should be assigned to a Christian Elder. And a Church would deserve blame which should lightly depart from an ancient and wholesome precedent. But still, the practice is one of those left to rest on Church-authority, not on any express injunction in Scripture.

[1] 1 Cor. and 1 Tim. [2] Heb. x. 25.

[3] See Ep. to Hebrews, and to Timothy.

template with the more minute attention each part of the sacred narrative. For instance, it is worth remarking that the matters concerning which the Apostle Paul's Epistles do contain the most detailed directions, are most of them precisely those which every one perceives to have relation only to the times in which he wrote: such as the eating or abstaining from 'meats offered to idols,' and the use and abuse of supernatural gifts. He was left, it should seem, *unrestrained* in recording—and hence he does record,—particular directions in *those cases where there was no danger* of those his directions being applied in *all* Ages and Countries, as binding on *every* Church *for ever*.

Remarkable circumstance in the matters of detail which the Scriptures do record.

Again, almost every attentive reader must have been struck with the circumstance, that there is no such description on record of the first appointment of the higher Orders of Christian ministers as there is (in Acts vi.) of the ordination of an *inferior* Class.[1] And this consideration alone would lead a reflecting mind to conclude, or at least strongly suspect, that the particular notice of this appointment of those seven officers is *incidental* only, and that probably there would have been as little said of these as of the Presbyters, but for the circumstance of the extraordinary effect produced by two of them, Stephen and Philip, as preachers, the narrative of their appointment being a natural and almost necessary introduction to that of two most important events, the great outbreak of persecution consequent on Stephen's martyrdom (which seems to have led, through the dispersion of the Disciples, to the founding of the first Gentile Church, at Antioch), and the conversion of Samaria.

But this conclusion is greatly strengthened when, on

[1] Commonly called Deacons; though it may reasonably be doubted whether they were Deacons in the sense in which Paul speaks of Deacons in the Epistle to Timothy. See the Article 'Deacon' in Eden's *Theological Dictionary*; and also Bernard's *Vitringa*.

a closer examination, we find reason to be convinced that these, so-called, first seven deacons (or rather treasurers), who are usually assumed (for I never met with even any attempt at proof) to have been the first that ever held such an office, were, in reality, only the first Grecian[1] treasurers, and that there were *Hebrew* treasurers before, or at least Hebrew officers having duties answering to those of these seven.

The Seven Deacons not the first appointed.

The following extract from an able article in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* on Ecclesiastical History, will make this point, I think, perfectly clear :—

'Meanwhile within the Church itself were displayed some slight symptoms of discontent, which deserve to be noticed particularly on account of the measure to which they gave rise. The complaint is called "a murmuring of the Grecians (or foreign Jews) against the Hebrews (or native Jews) because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." Who these widows probably were has already been suggested; and if the suggestion that they were deaconesses be admitted, the grounds of the complaint may be readily surmised. As the greatest share of duty would at this time devolve on the Hebrew widows or deaconesses, they might have been paid more liberally, as their services seemed to require; and hence the discontent.

'This, it is true, supposes that the order of deacons and deaconesses already existed, and may seem at first to contradict the statement of St. Luke, that in consequence of this murmuring, deacons were appointed. It does not, however, really contradict it; for evidently some *dispensers* there must have been, and if so, either the Apostles must have officiated as deacons, or special deacons there must have been, by whatever name they went. That the Apostles did not officiate is plain from the tenor of the narrative, which indicates that the appeal was made to them, and that they excused them

[1] Hellenist, or 'Grecian,' is the term constantly used for the *Jews* who used the Greek *language*; as distinguished from Hellen, a *Greek* or Gentile by *nation*.

selves from presiding personally at the "ministrations" (as was probably desired by the discontented party), alleging that it was incompatible with their proper duties. "It is not reason that we should *leave the word of God*, and serve tables." This very assertion, then, is proof certain that they did not officiate. Again, on reading over the names of the seven deacons, we find them all of the Grecian or Hellenistic party; Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, the last of whom is expressly described as "a proselyte of Antioch." Now this surely would have produced, in turn, a murmuring of the Hebrews against the Grecians, unless they had *already* had some in office interested in looking after their rights. With these presumptions in favour of a previous appointment of deacons, it would seem then, that these seven were *added* to the former number, because of the complaint.

'All that is thus far intimated of their office is, that they were employed in the daily distribution of the alms and the stipends due from the public fund. Whether, even at the first, their duties were limited to this department of *service*, may be reasonably doubted. Of this portion of their duties we are now informed; obviously because to the unsatisfactory mode in which this had been hitherto performed it was owing that the new appointment took place, and that the subject was noticed at all. It is, however, by no means improbable that the young men who carried out the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira, and who are described as "ready" in attendance, were of the same order; in other words, deacons by office, if not by name. What may serve to confirm this view of it is, the opposition between what would seem to have been their original title, and another order in the Church. They are called "juniors" and "young men" (*νεώτεροι* and *νεανίσκοι*), terms so strongly opposed to presbyters or elders as to incline one at the first glance to consider them as expressive of the two orders of the ministry, the seniors and the juniors (the *πρεσβύτεροι διάκονοι* and the *νεώτεροι διάκονοι*,); the two

orders, in short, which at length received the fixed and perpetual titles of presbyters and deacons.

'Accordingly, there is no just ground for supposing that, when the same term deacon occurs in the Epistles of St. Paul, a different order of men is intended; first, because an office may preserve its original name long after the duties originally attached to it have been changed; and, secondly, because, whatever duties may have been added to the office of deacons, it is certain that the duty of attending to the poor was for several centuries attached to it. Even after the deacons ceased to hold the office of treasurers, and the Bishops began to receive the revenues of their respective sees, the distribution of that portion which was allotted to charity still passed through the hands of the deacons. Hence, in a still later period, the title of cardinal deacon; and hence, too, the appropriation of the term *diaconiæ* to those Churches wherein alms used to be collected and distributed to the poor.

'Not that it is possible to point out, with anything like precision, the course of duty which belonged to the primitive deacons. That it corresponded entirely with that of our present order of deacons is very unlikely, whatever analogy be allowed from their relative situation in the Church. As the Church during the greater part of the first century was a shifting and progressive institution, their duties probably underwent continual change and modification. If we were to be guided, for instance, by the office in which we find the "young men" (*νεανίσκοι*), engaged, when the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira were removed, we should say that they performed the business which in the present day would devolve on the inferior attendants of our churches. If, again, we were to judge of their character from the occasion on which we find them acting as stewards of the Church fund, a higher station would be doubtless assigned to them, but still, one not more nearly connected with the ministry of the Word, nor approaching more to the sphere of duty which belongs to our deacons. On the other hand, the instances of Stephen and Philip

prove that the title was applied to those who were engaged in the higher departments of the ministry, although not in the highest.

'After all, it is most likely that the word deacon was originally applied, as its etymology suggests, to all the *ministers* of the Gospel establishment. But the Apostles having from the first a specific title, it more properly denoted any minister inferior to them,—any, however employed in the *service* of the Church. Between these, also, there soon obtained a distinction. If we suppose then, that the *seniors*, or superior class, were distinguished by the obvious title of Elder deacons (*πρεσβύτεροι διάκονοι*), the generic and unappropriated term "deacon" would devolve on the remaining class. And thus the present Order in the Church, to which that name is applied, may be truly asserted to be deacons in the apostolic and primitive sense of the word; and yet, nevertheless, much may be said about deacons, both in the New Testament and in the writings of the early fathers, which will not apply to them.'[1]

[1] The writer has proceeded on the supposition of the correctness of the general belief that the SEVEN men spoken of did belong to that order called *Deacons*, alluded to by Paul in writing to Timothy. But this is far from certain. The office indeed of 'ministering' or 'serving' at tables (*διακονεῖν*) is alluded to in reference to them: and in a certain sense, all *ministers*, of whatever kind, may be called 'Deacons' (*διάκονοι*), but 'the SEVEN' are *nowhere in Scripture* designated by this title. They are referred to in Acts * not as the 'Seven Deacons' but simply as *The Seven*. And the primary and especial office for which they were appointed—that of stewards and almoners—is not referred to at all, in what Paul says of the Office of a Deacon.† Hence some have inferred that '*The Seven*' persons mentioned in Acts ‡ were appointed to a *temporary* office, for a temporary and local emergency, and did not belong to the Order of Deacons strictly so called.

Be this as it may; at all events, it is plain, 1st, that we have, on either supposition, no distinct record of the *first* appointment of deacons, any more than of presbyters and bishops; and 2ndly, that the Churches appear always to have had, and to have exercised, full liberty to appoint various Orders of Ministers, under several titles, and for various offices, and to determine from time to time

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* Ch. xxi. 8. † 1 Tim. iii. ‡ Ch. vi.

If any one should be disposed to think it a question of small moment whether Stephen and his companions were or were not the first deacons ever appointed, or were, properly speaking, deacons at all, let him consider that, however unimportant in itself, it is one which throws much additional light on the subject now before us. We not only find few and scanty records of those details of the Church-government established by the Apostles, which, if they had designed to leave a model absolutely binding on all Christians for ever, we might have expected to find fully and clearly particularised, but also we find that a part even of what the inspired writers do record, is recorded incidentally only, for the elucidation of the rest of the narrative, and not in pursuance of any design to give a detailed statement of such particulars. Thus a further confirmation is furnished of the view that has been taken; viz. that it was the plan of the Sacred Writers to lay down clearly the *principles* on which Christian Churches were to be formed and governed, leaving the mode of application of those principles undetermined and discretionary.

Importance of the question.

§ 12. Now what did the Holy Spirit design that we should learn from all this? In the first place, 'he that hath ears to hear,' may draw from it, as has been already observed, a strong internal evidence of the genuineness and of the inspired character of our Sacred Books, inasmuch as they do not contain what would surely have been found in the works of men (whether impostors or sincere) left to themselves to record whatever seemed interesting and important.

Internal evidence of the Gospel resulting from the above views.

And this point of evidence presents itself to the mind at once, before we have even begun to inquire into the particular object proposed in the omission; because we may be sure, in this case, that what did *not* come from Man must have come from God.

But besides this, we may fairly infer, I think, the

what should be the functions and titles of the several orders.—See Bernard's Abridgment of *Vitringa on the Church and Synagogue.*

different characters of the several points connected with our religion. Since what is *essential* may be expected to be found clearly laid down in Scripture (for we could not properly be said to have any *revelation*, if we were left to seek among varying and doubtful traditions what are the fundamentals of our religion) we may conclude that whatever is *not* thus laid down must be of a different character. We may infer that those points which are either wholly passed over in silence (when they are such that we are certain, from the nature of the case, the Apostles must have given *some* directions relative to them) or are slightly mentioned, imperfectly described, and incidentally alluded to, must belong to the class of things either altogether indifferent, or so far non-essential in their character that 'it is not necessary' (as our 34th Article expresses it), 'they should be in all places one and utterly alike';—such in short that Divine wisdom judged it best they should be left to the discretion of each Church in each Age and Country, and should be determined according to the *principles* which had been distinctly laid down by Divine authority; while the *application* of those principles in particular cases was left (as is the case with our moral conduct also) to the responsible judgment of Man.

Of essentials a distinct revelation in Scripture to be expected.

It was designed, in short, that a Church should have (as our 34th Article expresses it) 'authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies and rites resting on Man's authority only' (this, be it observed, including things which may have been enjoined by the Apostles *to those among whom they were living*, and which, *to those persons*, had a Divine authority; but which are not recorded by the Sacred Writers as enjoined *universally*), 'so that all things be done to edifying': but that 'as no Church ought to decree anything *against* Holy Writ, so, *besides* the same ought it not to enforce the belief of anything as necessary to salvation.'

Extent and limits of the power of a Church.

§ 13. And we may also infer very clearly from an

attentive and candid survey of the Sacred Writings, not only that some things were intended to be absolutely enjoined as essential, and others left to the discretion of the rulers of each Church, but also that some things, again, were absolutely *excluded*, as inconsistent with the character of a Christian Community.

Things *enjoined*, things *excluded*, and things *left at large*.

It is very important, therefore, and to a diligent, and reflective, and unprejudiced reader, not difficult—by observing what the Sacred Writers have omitted, and what they have mentioned, and in what manner they have mentioned each, to form in his mind distinctly the three classes just alluded to: viz., 1st, of things essential to Christianity, and *enjoined* as universally requisite; 2ndly, those left to the *discretion* of the governors of each Church; and, 3rdly, those *excluded* as *inconsistent* with the character of the Gospel-religion.

Points essential, incompatible, *and* indifferent.

These last points are not least deserving of a careful examination, especially on account of the misconceptions relative to them that have prevailed and still prevail, in a large portion of the Christian world. It would lead me too far from the subject now immediately under consideration, to enter into a full examination of all the features that are to be found in most religions except the Christian, and which might have been expected to appear in that, supposing it of human origin, but which are expressly excluded from it. It may be worth while, however, to advert to a few of the most remarkable.

The Christian religion then arose, be it remembered, among a people who not only looked for a temporal Deliverer and Prince in their Messiah, but who had been accustomed to the sanction of temporal rewards and judgments to the Divine Law, whose laws, in religious and in secular matters alike, claimed to be an immediate revelation from Heaven—whose civil rulers were regarded as delegates from 'the Lord their God, Who was their King,' and were enjoined to punish with death, as a revolt from the supreme Civil Authority—as a crime of

Temporal sanctions succeeded by those of a future state.

the character of high treason,—any departure from the prescribed religion. It arose in a nation regarding themselves as subjects of a 'Kingdom of God,' that *was*, emphatically, a Kingdom of this world; and its most prominent character was its being 'a Kingdom *not* of this world.' It was in all respects the very reverse in respect of the points just mentioned, of what *might* have been expected, humanly speaking, from Jewish individuals, and of what *was* expected by the Jewish *Nation;* and, it may be added, of what many Christians have in every Age laboured to represent and to make it. While the mass of His own people were seeking to 'take Jesus by force to make Him a King' (a procedure which has been, virtually, imitated by a large proportion of His professed followers ever since), He Himself and His Apostles, uniformly and sedulously, both in their precepts and in their conduct, rejected as alien from the character of the Gospel all employment of secular coercion in behalf of their religion—all encroachment on 'the things that be Cæsar's,' and maintained the purely spiritual character of that 'Kingdom of Heaven' which they proclaimed.

Christianity a religion without Sacrifice, Altar, or Temple.

§ 14. Moreover the Gospel religion was introduced by men, and among men—whether Jews or Gentiles—who had never heard of or conceived such a thing as a religion without a Sacrificing-*Priest*,—without Altars for *Sacrifice*,—without *Sacrifices* themselves,—without either a *Temple*, or at least some High Place, Grove, or other sacred spot answering to a Temple;—some place, that is, in which the Deity worshipped was supposed more especially to dwell.[1]

The Apostles preached, for the first time—the first both to Jew and Gentile—a religion quite opposite in all these respects to all that had ever been heard of before:—a religion without any Sacrifice but that offered up by its Founder in His own person;—without any Sacrific-

[1] Hence the name of Ναὸς from *ναίειν*, 'to dwell.' See Hinds's *Three Temples*.

ing-Priest (Hiereus or Sacerdos)[1] except Him, the great and true High Priest,[2] and, consequently, with no Priest (in that sense) on earth: except so far as every one of the worshippers was required to present himself as a 'living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God';[3] and a religion without any Temple, except the collected congregation of the worshippers themselves.

[1] See Discourse *On the Christian Priesthood*, appended to Bampton Lectures. See also Eden's *Theological Dictionary*, Articles, 'Temple,' 'Altar,' etc.

It is worthy of remark that the notion of a *Sacerdotal-Priesthood* in the Christian Church, and that of *Apostolical-Succession* (in the sense of the Romanists, and of a certain party among Protestants), are generally maintained *together*. And yet they are not naturally and intrinsically connected; and there are some few persons—though but very few—who hold the latter doctrine, and not the former.

The conjunction of these two notions (which, as I have said, one generally meets with) may, I think, be thus accounted for.

A conceivable supposition it certainly is, though at variance with the fact, that the Apostles might have left us directions as precise, and injunctions as strict, respecting the mode of ordaining Christian ministers,—the rules for their succession—and the functions they were to exercise—as were given in the Mosaic Law relative to the Levitical Priesthood: and might yet have left the two Offices as distinct and unlike as in fact they are. This, I say, is what the Apostles *might* conceivably have done. But it is manifest they have not. And in the *absence* of any such precise directions in the *New* Testament—which is what the advocates of Apostolic-Succession (in the above sense) cannot quite conceal from themselves, they are naturally driven to resort to the *analogy of the Mosaic Law*; which does give (in respect of a *Sacerdotal*-Priesthood) just such precise directions and strict injunctions as are wanted for the purpose of the argument. And thence it is, I conceive, that men have been so often led to represent the Christian ministers as the regular successors of the Levitical, and Christian places of worship, of the Temple; and in short to *judaize* Christianity all through.

This will account for the fact (which I never heard accounted for in any other way) that almost every Church, Sect, or Party, that have adopted the above view of Apostolical-Succession, has also adopted—either at once, or gradually—that of a Sacerdotal-Priesthood also.

[2] Hebrews, ch. iv.

[3] Rom. xii. This offering the Apostle calls *θυσίαν ζῶσαν*, 'a living Sacrifice,' as distinguished from the *slain* animals offered up in other religions; and also *λογικὴ λατρεία*, 'a *reasonable* (i.e. rational) service,' as opposed to the *irrational* animals slain on the altars.

Let any one but contemplate the striking contrast between the confined—the local character—of the Mosaic system, and the character of boundless extension stamped on the Gospel of Christ. 'In the place which the Lord shall chuse' (says Moses [1]) 'to set His name therein, there shalt thou offer thy Sacrifices.' 'The hour cometh' (says Jesus [2]) 'when men shall neither on this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father': . . . . . 'wheresoever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.' [3] 'In His *Temple*' (says the Psalmist,[4] i.e. in His Temple at Jerusalem) 'doth every one speak of His glory': . . . . . 'there will I' (Jehovah) '*dwell*, for I have a delight therein': 'Ye are the *Temple*' (says the Apostle Paul) 'of the Holy Ghost, which *dwelleth* in you.' [5]

Now all this is deserving of attentive reflection, both as important in reference to a right knowledge of the true character of the religion of the Gospel, and also as furnishing a strong internal evidence as to its origin. For not only is it inconceivable that any impostor or enthusiast would have ever *devised* or dreamed of anything both so strange, and so unacceptable, as must have seemed in those days, a religion without Priest, Altar, Sacrifice, or Temple (in the sense in which men had always been accustomed to them;) but also it is no less incredible that any persons unaided by miraculous powers, should have *succeeded*—as the Apostles did—in propagating such a religion.

Christianity such a system as Man would not have devised, nor could have succeeded in propagating.

But what is most to our present purpose to remark is, that the Sacred Writers did not *omit* the mention of these things, and leave it to the discretion of each Church to introduce them or not; but they plainly appear to have distinctly *excluded* them. It is not that they made little or no mention of Temples, Sacrifices, and Sacrificing Priests; they mention them, and

Sacrifices, and Sacrificing Priests, *excluded* from Christianity.

[1] Deut. xii. [2] John iv. [3] Matt. xviii.
[4] Ps. xxix. [5] 1 Cor. iii.

allude to them perpetually, as existing, in the ordinary sense of the terms, among the Jews, and also among the Pagans; and, again, they also perpetually mention and allude to them in reference to the religion of the Gospel, invariably and manifestly *in a different sense.* Jesus Christ, as the Christian Priest and Christian Sacrifice—Christians themselves as 'living Sacrifices'—the Sacrifice of beneficence to the poor,[1]—the Temple composed of the Christian worshippers themselves; who are exhorted to 'build up' (or edify, *οἰκοδομεῖν*) one another, as 'living stones'[2] of the Temple of the Holy Ghost;—all these things are spoken of and alluded to continually; while in the primary and customary sense, the same terms are perpetually used by the same writers, in reference to the Jewish and to the Pagan religions, and never to the Christian.[3]

I cannot well conceive any proof more complete than is here afforded that Christ and His Apostles intended distinctly to exclude and forbid, as inconsistent with His religion, those things which I have been speaking of.

[1] 'To do good and to distribute, forget not, for with such Sacrifices (*θυσίαις*) God is well pleased.'

[2] 1 Peter ii. 5, etc.

[3] It is worth observing how distinctly our Church repudiates the notions of 'Sacrifice,' 'Temple,' etc., not merely by *omitting* the application of those terms in the Rubrics and Communion-Service, and not merely by dwelling on the 'sufficiency' of the '*one* oblation of Christ *once* offered,' but also by studiously introducing in that service the word 'Sacrifice' in the *other* senses in which it *is* applicable: viz., first, in the offertory, to '*alms*' ('with such *Sacrifices* God is well pleased') and afterwards, to the 'Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,' and again to the 'Sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies.' And in addition to this, a distinct Rubric is subjoined to explain that 'no adoration is intended or allowed' of the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

Will it be credited that in the nineteenth century the principles here inculcated have been gravely stated, in print, to be 'subversive of our Church' with 'its *Altars, Temples, Sacrificing*-Priests, and *adoration* of the Eucharistical bread and wine?'—all of which the writer would have seen, in simply looking over the Prayer-Book, to be utterly alien from our Church! The mistake of Tacitus, who represents the Jews as adoring the effigy of an ass, was nothing to this; because Gentiles not being admitted into the Temple at Jerusalem, had nothing but hearsay to trust to.

It being the natural and inherent office of any Community to make by-laws for its own regulation, *where not restricted by some higher Authority*, these points are precisely those which come under that restriction; being distinctly excluded by the Founder and Supreme Governor of the Universal Church, as inconsistent with the character of His religion.

Unreasonable restriction, and unreasonable extension of Church powers, advocated by the same persons.

It seems something strange, therefore—though in other matters also experience shows the liability of men to maintain at once opposite errors—that the very persons who are for restricting the most narrowly—or rather annulling—the natural right of a Community to make and alter by-laws in matters not determined by a superior authority, and who deny that any Church is at liberty to depart, even in matters left undecided in Scripture, from the supposed, or even conjectured practice of the Apostles—these very persons are found advocating the introduction into Christianity of practices and institutions and doctrines not only unauthorised, but plainly excluded, by its inspired promulgators—such as Sacrifices and Sacrificing-Priests; thus at once denying the rights which do belong to a Christian Community, and asserting those which do not: at once fettering the Church by a pretended obligation to conform strictly to some supposed precedents of antiquity, and boldly casting off the obligation to adhere to the plainest injunctions of God's written Word—'Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.'[1]

The Christian Church universal has no Spiritual Head on Earth.

§ 15. Among the things excluded from the Christian system, we are fully authorised to include all subjection of the Christian world, permanently, and from generation to generation, to some one Spiritual Ruler (whether an individual man or a Church) the delegate, representative and vicegerent of Christ; whose authority should be binding on the conscience of all, and

[1] Mark vii. 9.

decisive on every point of faith. Jesus Himself, Who told His Disciples that it was 'expedient for them that He should go away, that He might send them another Comforter, who should abide with them for ever,' could not possibly have failed, had such been His design, to refer them to the man, or body of men, who should, in perpetual succession, be the depositary of this Divine consolation and supremacy. And it is wholly incredible that He Himself should be perpetually spoken of and alluded to as the Head of His Church, without any reference to any Supreme Head on earth, as fully representing Him, and bearing universal rule in His name—whether Peter or any other Apostle, or any successor of one of these—this, I say, is utterly incredible, supposing the Apostles or their Master had really designed that there should be for the universal Church any institution answering to the oracle of God under the Old Dispensation, at the Tabernacle or the Temple.

The Apostle Paul, in speaking of miracles as 'the signs of an Apostle,' evidently implies that no one NOT possessing such miraculous gifts as his,[1] much less without possessing any at all—could be entitled to be regarded as even on a level with the Apostles; yet he does not, by virtue of that his high office, claim for himself, or allow to Peter or any other, supreme rule over all the Churches.[2] And while he claims and exercises the right to decide authoritatively on points of faith and of practice on which he had received express revelations, he does not leave his converts any injunction to apply, hereafter, when he shall be removed from them, to the Bishop or Rulers of any other Church, for such decisions; or to any kind of permanent living Oracle to dictate to all Christians in all Ages. Nor does he even ever hint at any subjection of one Church to another, singly, or to any number of others collectively;—to that of Jerusalem, for instance, or of Rome; or to any kind of General Council.[3]

The miraculous Signs of an Apostle requisite for any claimant of apostolical power.

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 18. [2] Gal. ii. 7-9.
[3] See the *Search after Infallibility*.

No one Community on Earth possessing power over all Christians.

It appears plainly from the sacred narrative, that though the many Churches which the Apostles founded were branches of one *Spiritual* Brotherhood, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Heavenly Head—though there was 'one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism,' for all of them, yet they were each a distinct, independent Community *on Earth*, united by the common principles on which they were founded, and by their mutual agreement, affection, and respect; but not having any one recognised Head on Earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of one of these Societies over others.[1]

General Councils not authorised by Scripture.

And as for—so-called—General Councils, we find not even any mention of them, or allusion to any such expedient. The pretended first Council, at Jerusalem, does seem to me[2] a most extraordinary chimera, without any warrant whatever from Sacred History. We find in the narrative, that certain persons, coming from Jerusalem to Antioch, endeavoured to impose on the Gentile converts the yoke of the Mosaic Law; pretending—as appears plainly from the context[3]—to have the sanction of the Apostles for this. Nothing could be more natural than the step which was thereupon taken—to send a deputation to Jerusalem to enquire whether these pretensions were well founded. The Apostles, in the midst of an Assembly of the Elders (or Clergy, as they would now be called) of Jerusalem, decided that no such burden ought to be imposed, and that their pretended sanction had not been given. The Church at Jerusalem, even independently of the Apostles, had, of course, power to decide this last point; i.e. to declare the fact whether they had or had not given the pretended sanction: and

[1] Generally speaking, the Apostles appear to have established a distinct Church in each considerable city; so that there were several even in a single province; as for instance, in Macedonia, those of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, Amphipolis, etc.; and the like in the Province of Achaia, and elsewhere.

[2] See Burnet on Art. [3] Acts xv. 24.

the Apostles, confessedly, had plenary power to declare the will of the Lord Jesus. And the deputation accordingly retired, satisfied. There is no hint throughout of any summons to the several Churches in Judea and Galilee, in Samaria, Cyprus, Cyrene, etc., to send deputations, as to a General Council; nor any assumption of a right in the *Church* of Jerusalem, as such, to govern the rest, or to decide on points of faith.

Pretended first General Council, not of that character.

It is worth remarking also, that, as if on purpose to guard against the assumption which might, not unnaturally, have taken place, of some supremacy —such as no Church was designed to enjoy —on the part of Jerusalem, the fountain-head of the religion, it was by the *special appointment* of the Holy Spirit that Saul[1] and Barnabas were *ordained* to the very highest office, the Apostleship, *not* by the hands of *the other Apostles*, or of any persons at *Jerusalem*, but by the *Elders of Antioch*. This would have been the less remarkable had *no human* ordination at all taken place, but merely a special immediate appointment of them by Divine revelation. But the command given was, 'separate me. . . . let them go.'[2] *Some* reason for such a procedure there must have been; and it does seem probable that it was designed for the very purpose (among others) of impressing on men's minds the independence and equality of the several Churches on Earth.

Ordination of Saul and Barnabas.

We should consider too, in addition to all these circumstances, the number and the variety of the Epistles of Paul (to say nothing of those of the other Apostles) and the deep anxiety he manifests for the continuance

[1] For whether Saul's previous call to the Apostleship by Jesus Christ Himself, were, or were not, already *publicly known to the Church*, it is plain that both he and Barnabas were, at this time, by Divine command, 'separated,' and solemnly ordained to the 'work to which the Lord had appointed them,' and were thereupon and thenceforward recognised as Apostles.

[2] Acts xiii. 2, 3.

of his converts in the right faith, and his earnest warnings of them[1] against the dangers to their faith, which he foresaw. And we should consider also the incalculable importance of such an institution (supposing it to exist) as a permanent living Oracle and supreme Ruler of the Church on Earth; and the necessity of pointing it out so clearly that no one could possibly, except through wilful blindness and obstinacy, be in any doubt as to the place and persons whom the Lord should have thus 'chosen to cause His name to dwell' therein, especially as a plain reference to this infallible judge, guide, and governor, would have been so obvious, easy, short, and decisive a mode of guarding against the doubts, errors, and dissensions which he so anxiously apprehended. And when we consider all this, it does seem a perfect moral impossibility, that Paul and the other Sacred Writers should have written as they have done, without any mention or allusion to anything of the kind, if it had been a part (and it must have been a most *essential* part, if it were any) of the Christian system. They do not merely omit all reference to any supreme and infallible Head and Oracle of the Universal Church, to any Man or Body, as the representative and Vicegerent of Christ, but they omit it in such a manner, and under such circumstances, as plainly to amount to an exclusion.[2]

Impossibility of Paul's having omitted to notice a supreme universal tribunal, had there been any.

[1] Acts xx.

[2] It is worthy of remark that the pretensions of the Church of Rome to be at once 'the Catholic [or Universal] Church,' and also to be Divinely *exempted from errors and dissensions*, are overthrown, by the very *existence* of Protestants, and of the Greek and some other Churches. If these do *not* properly belong to the Church of Rome, as subjects, though revolted and disobedient subjects, then, it is not *Universal*; if—which is what is actually alleged—they do thus belong to it, then, it is manifestly not exempt from *error and dissension*. It is true the Authorities of that Church *condemn* all who disown her supremacy: but this does not affect the argument. For, an *exemption* from any evil does not consist in its being *censured*, but in its *not arising* at all. It would be absurd to call a certain town incombustible, on the ground that a cry of 'fire' is raised in it whenever a conflagration breaks out. It would be easy,

It may be added, that the circumstance of our Lord's having *deferred* the commencement of His Church till after His own *departure* in bodily person, from the earth, seems to have been designed as a further safeguard against the notion I have been alluding to. Had He publicly presided in bodily person subsequently to the completion of the Redemption by His death, over a Church in Jerusalem or elsewhere, there would have been more plausibility in the claim to *supremacy* which might have been set up and admitted, on behalf of that Church, and of His own successors in the Government of it. His previously withdrawing, made it the more easily to be understood that He was to remain the spiritual Head in Heaven, of the spiritual Church-universal; and consequently of all particular Churches, equally, in all parts of the world.

Commencement of Christian Church; deferred till Christ's departure.

§ 16. This therefore, and the other points just mentioned, must be regarded as *negatively* characteristic of the Christian religion, no less than it is positively characterised by those truths, and those enactments which the inspired Writers lay down as essential. Their prohibitions in the one case, are as plain as their injunctions in the other.

Importance of points excluded.

There is not indeed any systematic enumeration of the several points that are excluded as inconsistent with the character of the religion; answering to the prohibition of Idolatry in the Decalogue, the enumeration of forbidden meats, and other such enactments of the Levitical Law. But the same may be said no less of the affirmative directions also that are to be found in the New Testament. The fundamental doctrines and the great moral principles of the Gospel are there taught, for wise reasons no doubt, and which I think we may in part perceive, not in creeds or other regular formularies,

—and nugatory—for any Body of men, however few, to boast that all *ought* to submit to them; that all do submit, *except* those who disobey; and that all agree with their doctrines except those who dissent.

but incidentally, irregularly, and often by oblique allusions; less striking indeed at first sight than distinct enunciations and enactments, but often even the more decisive and satisfactory from that very circumstance; because the Apostles frequently allude to some truth as not only essential, but indisputably admitted, and familiarly *known to be* essential by those they were addressing.[1]

Certainty with which things enjoined, forbidden and discretionary, may be distinguished.

On the whole then, I cannot but think an attentive and candid inquirer, who brings to the study of Scripture no extraordinary learning or acuteness, but an unprejudiced and docile mind, may ascertain with reasonable certainty, that there are points, and what those points are, which are insisted on by our Sacred Writers as *essential;* and again, which are excluded as *inconsistent* with the religion they taught; and again, that there are many other points, some of them such that the Apostles cannot but have practically decided them in one way or another *on particular occasions* (such as the mode of administering the Eucharist, and many others), respecting which they have not *recorded* their decisions, or made any *general* enactment to be observed in all Ages and Countries.

And the inference seems to be inevitable, that they *purposely* left these points to be decided in each Age and Country, according to the discretion of the several Churches, by a careful *application* of the *principles* laid down by Christ and His Apostles.

§ 17. At variance with what has been now said, and also at variance with each other, are some opinions which are to be found among different classes of Christians, in these, as well as in former times. The opposite errors (as they appear to me to be) of those opinions, may in many instances be traced, I conceive, in great measure, to the same cause; to the neglect, namely, of the distinction—

Opposite errors at variance with the above principles.

[1] See *Rhetoric*, 6th Edition, Part I. ch. 2, § 4.

obvious as it is to any tolerably attentive reader—which has been just noticed, between those things on the one hand, which are either plainly declared and strictly *enjoined*, or distinctly *excluded*, by the Sacred Writers, and on the other hand, those on which they give no distinct decision, injunction, or prohibition; and which I have thence concluded they meant to place under the jurisdiction of each Church. To the neglect of this distinction, and again to a want of due consideration of the character, offices, and rights of a Christian Community, may be attributed, in a great degree, the prevalence of errors the most opposite to each other.

Error of those who regard no Church-ordinances, etc. as binding.

There are persons, it is well known, who from not finding in Scripture precise directions and strict commands as to the constitution and regulation of a Christian Church—the several Orders of Christian ministers, the distinct functions of each, and other such details, have adopted the conclusion—or at least seem to lean more or less towards the conclusion—that it is a matter entirely left to each individual's fancy or convenience to join one Christian Society or another, or none at all;—to take upon himself, or confer on another, the ministerial office, or to repudiate altogether any Christian ministry whatever: to join or withdraw from any or every religious Assembly for joint Christian worship, according to the suggestion of his individual taste: in short (for this is what it really amounts to when plainly stated), to proceed as if the sanction manifestly given by our Lord and His Apostles to the establishment of Christian Communities, and consequently to all the privileges and powers implied in the very nature of a Community, and also the inculcation in Scripture of the *principles* on which Christian Churches are to be conducted, were all *to go for nothing*, unless the application of these principles to each particular point of the details of Church-government, can also be found no less plainly laid down in Scripture.

Now though I would not be understood as insinuating anything against the *actual* morality of life of those who

take such views, I cannot but remark that their *mode of reasoning* does seem to me perfectly analogous to that of men who should set at nought all the moral principles of the Gospel, and account nothing a sin that is not expressly particularised as forbidden—nothing a duty that is not, in so many words, enjoined. Persons who entertain such lax notions as I have been alluding to, respecting Church-enactments, should be exhorted to reflect carefully on the obvious and self-evident but often forgotten truth—the oftener forgotten, perhaps, in practice, from its *being* self-evident—that *right* and *duty* are reciprocal; and, consequently, that since a Church has a *right* (derived, as has been shown, both from the very nature of a Community, and from Christ's sanction) to *make* regulations, etc., not at variance with Scripture-principles, it follows that *compliance* with such regulations must be a *duty* to the individual members of that Church.

Mistake of expecting precise directions on each point of detail.

On the other hand, there are some who, in their abhorrence and dread of principles and practices subversive of all good order, and tending to anarchy and to every kind of extravagance, have thought, or at least professed to think, that we are bound to seek for a distinct authoritative sanction in the Scriptures or *in some other ancient*[1] *writings*—some *Tradition* in short—for each separate point which we would maintain. They assume that whatever doctrines

Error of those who seek in Scripture or Tradition for a sanction to each Church-enactment.

[1] By 'ancient' some persons understand what belongs to the first *three* centuries of the Christian era; some, the first four; some, seven; so arbitrary and uncertain is the standard by which some would persuade us to try questions, on which they, at the same time, teach us to believe our Christian Faith and Christian Hope are staked!

'Scire velim, pretium chartis quotus arroget annus:
* * * * * * * *
Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos.
Quid? qui deperiit minor uno mense vel anno,
Inter quos referendus erit? veteresne?' * * *

Horace, Epist. I. b. 2.

or practices, whatever institutions, whatever regulations respecting Church-government, we can conclude, either with certainty or with any degree of probability, to have been either introduced by the Apostles or to have prevailed in their time or in the time of their immediate successors, are to be considered as absolutely binding on all Christians for ever—as a model from which no Church is at liberty to depart. And they make our membership of the Church of Christ and our hopes of the Gospel-salvation depend on an exact adherence to everything that is proved, or believed, or even suspected to be an Apostolical usage, and on our possessing what they call Apostolical Succession, that is, on our having a ministry whose descent can be traced up in an unbroken and undoubted chain to the Apostles themselves, through men regularly ordained by them or their successors, according to the exact forms originally appointed. And all Christians (so called) who do not come under this description, are to be regarded either as outcasts from 'the Household of Faith,' or at best as in a condition 'analogous to that of the Samaritans of old' who worshipped on Mount Gerizim,[1] or as in 'an intermediate state between Christianity and Heathenism,' and as 'left to the uncovenanted mercies of God.'

These notions are fostered by the ambiguous employment of the phrases '*Divine appointment*,' '*Divine institution*,' '*Divine origin*,' etc.: that which is proved in one sense being often assumed in another. Whatever is, strictly speaking, a *Divine* appointment—i.e. enjoined by a plain revelation as binding on all Christians—from this, evidently, nothing short of a fresh revelation can authorise a departure. On the other hand, many things, we are sure, must have been enacted, from time to time, by the Apostles, doubtless under Divine guidance, but which have not been laid down by them as of perpetual and universal obligation. Of many of these, such as, for instance, the particular mode in which they celebrated the Eucharist,

Ambiguity of 'Divine origin,' etc.

[1] John iv.

we are left ignorant: of some institutions again of this character—as for instance the observance of the Love-feasts (Agapæ)—we have some knowledge from incidental allusions in the Sacred Writings and from uninspired authors.

Now to prove, as certain or as probable, the 'Divine origin' of any institution in this latter sense—i.e. simply that it had the sanction of the Apostles—is often put forward as if it were a proof of its 'Divine origin' in the *other* sense—as a proof that they must have designed it to be of *universal and perpetual obligation;* even where they have omitted to indicate any such design, and where such omission, had that design existed, would have been unaccountable. It is surely not showing reverence for the Apostles, either as inspired servants of God or even as men of ordinary good sense, to suppose that they would leave the *essentials of Christianity* to be collected from *incidental allusions* or from *doubtful traditions,* quite inaccessible to the generality of Christians, and about which the learned few are far from being agreed.

Church-ordinances removed from a firm foundation, and rested on a basis of sand.

§ 18. Those who on such grounds as I have been speaking of defend the Institutions and Ordinances, and vindicate the Apostolical Character of our own (or, indeed, of any) Church—whether on their own sincere conviction or as believing that such arguments are the best calculated to inspire the mass of mankind with becoming reverence, and to repress the evil of schism—do seem to me, in proportion as they proceed on those principles, to be in the same degree, removing our institutions from a foundation on a rock, to place them on sand. Instead of a clearly-intelligible, well-established, and *accessible* proof of Divine sanction for the claims of our Church, they would substitute one that is not only obscure, disputable, and out of the reach of the mass of mankind, but even self-contradictory, subversive of our own and every Church's claims, and leading to the very

evils of doubt and schismatical division, which it is desired to guard against.

The Rock on which I am persuaded our Reformers intended, and rightly intended, to rest the Ordinances of our Church is the warrant to be found in the Holy Scriptures written by, or under the direction of, those to whom our Lord has entrusted the duty of 'teaching men to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them.' For in those Scriptures we find a Divine sanction clearly given to a regular Christian Community—a Church which is, according to the definition in our 19th Article,[1] 'a congregation (i.e. Society or Community; Ecclesia) of faithful men,[2] in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things which of necessity are requisite to the same.' Now since, from the very nature of the case, every Society must have Officers, appointed in some way or other, and every Society that is to be *permanent* a perpetual *succession* of Officers, in whatever manner kept up, and must have also a power of enacting, abrogating, and enforcing on its own members such regulations or by-laws as are not opposed to some higher authority, it follows inevitably

True foundation of Church-enactments.

[1] In our Article as it stands in the *English*, it is '*The* visible Church of Christ is,' etc.; but there can be no doubt, I think, that the more correct version from the Latin (the *Latin* Articles appear to have been the original, and the English a translation—in some few places, a careless translation—from the Latin) would have been '*A* visible Church,' etc. The Latin 'Ecclesia Christi visibilis' would indeed answer to either phrase; the want of an *article*, definite or indefinite, in that language rendering it liable to such ambiguity. But the context plainly shows that the writer is not speaking of the Universal Church, but of particular Churches, such as the 'Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome.' The English translator probably either erred from momentary inattention, or (more likely) understood by 'Ecclesia,' and by 'the Church,' the particular Church whose Articles were before him—the Church of England. If it had been designed, and deliberately designed, to describe '*The* Universal Church' it would most likely have been called '*The* congregation,' etc., instead of 'A congregation.' See note to § 24.

[1] i.e. believers in Christ;—fideles;—πιστοί.

(as I have above observed) that any one who sanctions a Society, gives, in so doing, his sanction to those essentials of a Society, its Government, its Officers, its Regulations. Accordingly, even if our Lord had *not* expressly said anything about 'binding and loosing,' still the very circumstance of His sanctioning a Christian Community would necessarily have implied His sanction of the institutions, ministers, and Government of a Christian Church, so long as nothing is introduced at variance with the positive enactments, and the fundamental principles, laid down by Himself and His Apostles.

§ 19. This, which I have called a foundation on a rock, is evidently that on which (as has been just observed) our Reformers designed to place our Church.

The English reformers chose the true foundation.

While they strongly deny to any Church the power to 'ordain anything contrary to God's Word,' or to require, as essential to salvation, belief in anything not resting on Scriptural authority, they claim the power for each Church of ordaining and altering 'rites and ceremonies,' 'so that all things be done to edifying,' and nothing 'contrary to God's Word.' They claim on that ground for our own Church a recognition of that power in respect of the Forms of Public Service;—on the ground, that is (Art. 36), that these 'contain nothing that is in itself superstitious and ungodly.'

Claim of the ministers of the Anglican Church.

And they rest the claims of ministers, not on some supposed sacramental virtue, transmitted from hand to hand in unbroken succession from the Apostles, in a chain, of which, if any one link be even doubtful, a distressing uncertainty is thrown over all Christian Ordinances, Sacraments, and Church-privileges for ever; but, on the fact of those ministers being the *regularly-appointed officers of a regular Christian Community.* 'It is not lawful' (says the 23rd Article) 'for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be *lawfully called and sent* to execute the same. And

those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have *public authority given unto them in the congregation*, to call and send ministers into the Lord's Vineyard.'[1]

Those who are not satisfied with the foundation thus laid—and which, as I have endeavoured to show, is the very foundation which Christ and His Apostles have prepared for us,—who seek to take higher ground, as the phrase is, and maintain what are called, according to the modern fashion, 'Church-principles,' or 'Church-of-England principles,' are in fact subverting the principles both of our own Church in particular and of every Christian Church that claims the inherent rights belonging to a Community, and confirmed by the sanction of God's Word as contained in the Holy Scriptures. It is advancing, but not in the right road—it is advancing not in sound learning, but error—not in faith, but in superstitious credulity, to seek for some higher and better ground on which to rest our doctrines and institutions than that on which they were placed by 'the Author and Finisher of our Faith.'[2]

Pretended Church-principles subversive of the functions and rights of a Church.

[1] See § 23.

[2] It is curious to observe how very common it is for any Sect or Party to assume a title indicative of the very excellence in which they are especially deficient, or strongly condemnatory of the very errors with which they are especially chargeable. Thus, those who from time to time have designated themselves 'Gnostics,' i.e. persons '*knowing*' the Gospel, in a far superior degree to other professed Christians,—have been generally remarkable for their *want* of knowledge of the very first rudiments of evangelical truth. The phrase 'Catholic' religion (i.e. 'Universal') is the most commonly in the mouths of those who are the most limited and *exclusive* in their views, and who seek to shut out the largest number of Christian Communities from the Gospel-covenant. 'Schism,' again, is by none more loudly reprobated than by those who are not only the immediate authors of schism, but the advocates of principles tending to generate and perpetuate schisms without end. And 'Church-principles,'—'High-church principles,'—'Church-of-England principles,'—are the favourite terms of those who go

On this point I will take the liberty of inserting an extract from a Charge delivered a few years ago, because I wish to point out that the views I am taking, whether sound or unsound—and this I sincerely wish to be decided according to the reasons adduced—are at least not hastily, but deliberately, adopted, and have undergone no change in that interval.

'When I speak of unceasing progress—of continual improvement in all that pertains to the Christian life—as what we ought to aim at, both in ourselves and in those with whom we have influence, it may perhaps be proper to add, that this does not imply any attempt "to be wise above that which is written,"—any expectation of a new and additional revelation, or of the discovery of new doctrines, any pretensions to inspiration—or hopes of a fresh outpouring of that or of any other miraculous gifts. It seemed needful to make this remark, because such hopes have been cherished, such pretensions put forth from time to time in various ages of the Church, and not least in the present.

Christian advancement.

'I have coupled together these two things—miraculous gifts and a new revelation—because I conceive them to be in reality inseparable. Miracles are the only sufficient credentials on which any one can reasonably demand assent to doctrines not clearly revealed (*to the understanding of his hearers*) in Scripture. The promulgation of new articles of faith, or of articles which, though not avowedly new, are yet not obviously contained in Scripture, is most presumptuous unless so authenticated. And again, pretensions to miraculous powers such as those of Moses and the Prophets—of Christ and the Apostles, seem to imply some such object

Miraculous gifts and revelation inseparable.

the furthest in subverting all these.* Obvious as this fallacy is, there is none more commonly successful in throwing men off their guard.

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* And it may be added, that the term 'Non-sectarian' is constantly in the mouth of those who are most emphatically *sectarian* in their views.—*Note by Editor.*

to be furthered by them. At any rate, those who shall have thus established their claim to be considered as messengers from Heaven *may* evidently demand assent to whatever they may, in that character, promulgate. If any persons therefore pretend to such a mark of a Divine commission as the gift of tongues, or any other such power, no one who admits their pretensions can consistently withhold assent from anything they may declare themselves commissioned to teach.

'And, again, if any persons claim for any traditions of the Church, an authority, either paramount to Scripture, or equal to Scripture, or concurrent with it,—or, which comes to the very same thing, *decisive as to the interpretation of Scripture*,—taking on themselves to decide what *is* "the Church," and *what* tradition is to be thus received,—these persons are plainly called on to establish by miraculous evidence the claims they advance. And if they make their appeal not to miracles wrought by themselves, but to those which originally formed the evidence of the Gospel, they are bound to show by some decisive proof that that evidence can fairly be brought to bear upon and authenticate their pretension;—that they are, by Christ's decree, the rightful depositaries of the power they claim.

'But to such as reject and protest against all such groundless claims, an interminable field is still open for the application of all the faculties, intellectual and moral, with which God has endowed us, for the fuller understanding and development of the truths revealed in His written Word. To learn and to teach what is there to be found;—to develop more and more fully to your own minds and to those of your hearers, what the Evangelists and Apostles have conveyed to us, will be enough and more than enough to occupy even a longer life than any of us can expect.

Improved understanding of what is written, to be distinguished from additions to the Gospel.

'The Mosaic Dispensation was the dawn of "the dayspring from on high," not yet arrived—of a Sun only about to rise. It was a Revelation in itself imperfect. The Sun of the Gospel arose; "the true Light,

which lighteth every one that cometh into the world," appeared: but it was partially hidden, and is so still, by a veil of clouds;—by prejudices of various kinds,—by the passions, and infirmities, and ignorance of mankind. We may advance, and we may lead others to advance, indefinitely in the full development of Gospel-truth—of the real character and meaning and design of Christ's religion; not by seeking to *superadd* something to the Gospel-revelation; but by a more correct and fuller comprehension of it;—not by increasing, absolutely, the light of the noonday-sun, but by clearing away the mists which obscure our view of it. Christianity itself cannot be improved; but men's views, and estimate, and comprehension of Christianity, may be indefinitely improved.

Caution necessary against erroneous pursuits of religious knowledge.

'Vigilant discretion, however, is no less needful than zeal and perseverance, if we would really advance in the Christian course. The most active and patient traveller, if he be not also watchfully careful to keep in the right road, may, after having once diverged from it into some other track, be expending his energies in going further and further astray, while he fancies himself making progress in his journey.

'In various ways is the Christian, and not least the Christian minister, liable to this kind of self-deception. I am not now, you will observe, adverting chiefly to the danger of mistaking what is absolutely false for true, or wrong for right; but rather to that of mistaking the real character of some description of truth or of valuable knowledge. We have to guard against mistake, for instance, as to what is or is not a part of the Christian *Revelation*;—a truth *belonging* to the Gospel, and resting, properly, on Divine authority. While advancing in the attainment of what may be in itself very valuable and important knowledge, we may be in fact going further and further in error, if we confound together the inspired and the uninspired,—the sacred text with the human comment.

'There are persons (such as I have above alluded to)

who in their zeal—in itself laudable—to advance towards a full comprehension of the Gospel revelation, have conceived that they are to seek for this by diligent research into the tenets and practices of what is called the Primitive Church; i.e. the Christian world during the first three or first four Ages. And some have even gone so far as to represent the revelation of the Christian scheme contained in the New Testament as a mere imperfect and uncompleted outline, which was to be filled up by the Church in the succeeding three centuries;—as a mere beginning of that which the early Fathers were empowered and commissioned to finish: though on what grounds any kind of authority is claimed for the Church *then*, which does not equally belong to it at this day, or at any intermediate period, no one, as far as I know, has even attempted to make out.

Pretended developments of the Gospel.

'Now to learn what has been said and done by eminent men in every Age of the Church, is of course interesting and valuable to a theological student. And a man of modesty and candour will not fail to pay great attention to their opinions, in whatever period they may have lived. He will also inquire with peculiar interest into the belief and the practices of those who had been instructed by the immediate disciples and other contemporaries of the Apostles themselves. But the mistake is, to assume, on the ground of presumptuous conjecture (for of proof there is not even a shadow), that these men were infallible interpreters of the Apostles, and had received from them by tradition something not contained, or not plainly set forth, in their writings, but which yet were designed by those very Apostles as a necessary portion of Christianity.

'Not only are all these assumptions utterly groundless and unwarrantable, but on the contrary, even if there is anything which we can be morally certain *was* practised in the time of the Apostles, and with their sanction (as is the case, for instance, with the Agapæ or Love-feasts), we must yet consider it as not designed by them to be of universal and perpetual obligation, where

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they have not distinctly laid it down as such in their writings. By omitting, in any case, thus to record certain of their practices, or directions, they have given us as clear an indication as we could have looked for of their design to leave these to the free choice and decision of each Church in each Age and Country. And there seems every reason to think that it was on purpose to avoid misapprehensions of this kind, that they did leave unrecorded so much of what we cannot but be sure they must have practised, and said, and established in the Churches under their own immediate care.

No essentials of Christianity omitted by the Sacred Writers.

'And it should be remembered that what some persons consider as the *safe* side in respect of such points, as the extreme of scrupulous and cautious veneration, is in truth the reverse. A wise and right-minded reverence for Divine authority will render us doubly scrupulous of reckoning anything as a Divine precept or institution without sufficient warrant. Yet, at the first glance, a readiness to bestow religious veneration, with or without good grounds (which is the very characteristic of superstition) is apt to be mistaken for a sign of pre-eminent piety. Besides those who hold the "double doctrine" —the "disciplina arcani"—and concerning whom therefore it would be rash to pronounce whether any particular tenet taught by them is one which they inwardly believe, or is one of the exoteric instructions deemed expedient for the multitude—besides these persons, there are, no doubt, men of sincere though mistaken piety who, as has been just intimated, consider it as the safe side in all doubtful cases, to adhere with unhesitating confidence to everything that *may possibly* have been introduced or practised by the Apostles—to make everything an article of Christian faith that could have been implied in anything they may have taught. But such persons would perceive on more careful and sober reflection, that a rightly scrupulous piety consists, as has been said, in drawing the line as distinctly as we are able between what is and what is not *designed* by our Divine instructors as a por-

The safe side.

tion of their authoritative precepts and directions. It is by this careful anxiety to *comply with their intention with respect to us* that we are to manifest a true veneration for them.

'Anything that does not fall within this rule we may believe, but not as a part of the Christian *revelation;* we may practise, but not as a portion of the *divine institutions essential to a Christian Church*, and binding on all men in all Ages: not, in short, as something placed beyond the bounds of that "binding and loosing" power which belongs to *every* Church, in reference to things neither enjoined in Scripture nor at variance with it. Otherwise, even though what we believe should be, really and in itself, true, and though what we practise should chance to be in fact what the Apostles did practise, we should not be honouring, but dishonouring God, by taking upon ourselves to give the sanction of His authority to that from which He has thought fit to withhold that sanction. When the Apostle Paul gave his advice on matters respecting which he "had no commandment from the Lord," he of course thought that what he was recommending was good; but so far was he from presuming to put it forth as a Divine command, that he expressly notified the contrary. Let us not think to manifest our pious humility by reversing the Apostle's procedure!

'I have thought it needful, in these times especially, to insert this caution against such mistaken efforts after advancement in Christian knowledge and practice; against the delusions of those who, while they exult in their imagined progress in the Christian course, are, in reality, straying into other paths, and following a bewildering meteor.'

§ 20. Those whose 'Church-principles' lead them thus to remove from a firm foundation the institutions of a Christian Church, and especially of our own, and to place them on the sand, are moreover compelled, as it were with their own hands, to dig away even that very foundation of sand. For in respect of our own

Church, since it inculcates repeatedly and earnestly, as a fundamental principle,[1] that nothing is to be insisted on as an essential point of faith that is not taught in Scripture, any member of our Church who should *make* essentials of points confessedly NOT found in Scripture, and who should consequently make it a point of necessary faith to *believe* that these *are* essentials, must unavoidably be pronouncing condemnation either on himself or on the very Church he belongs to, and whose claims he is professing to fortify.

Pretended Church-principles fatal to the Christian hopes and privileges even of their advocates.

But, moreover, not from our own Church only but from the Universal Church—from all the privileges and promises of the Gospel—the principles I am condemning go to exclude, if fairly followed out, the very persons who advocate them. For it is certain that our own institutions and practices (and the like may be said, I apprehend, of every other Church in the world) though not, we conceive, *at variance* with any apostolical injunctions, or with any Gospel principle, are, in several points, not precisely *coincident* with those of the earliest Churches. The Agapæ for instance, or 'Love-feasts,' alluded to just above, have in most Churches been long discontinued. The 'Widows' again, whom we find mention of in Paul's Epistles, appear plainly to have been an order of deaconesses regularly appointed to particular functions in the earliest Churches: and their deacons appear to have had an office considerably different from those of our Church.

Departures from Apostolical precedents, general.

Again, it seems plainly to have been at least the general, if not the universal practice of the Apostles to appoint over each separate *Church a single* individual as a chief Governor under the title of '*Angel*' (i.e. *Messenger* or *Legate* from the Apostles) or 'BISHOP,' i.e. *Superintendent* or Overseer. A CHURCH and a DIOCESE seem to have been for a considerable time *co-extensive* and

Each Bishop originally presided over one entire Church.

[1] Besides the Articles, see, on this point, the Ordination Service.

identical. And each Church or Diocese (and consequently each Superintendent), though connected with the rest by ties of Faith and Hope and Charity, seems to have been (as has been already observed) perfectly independent as far as regards any power of control.

The plan pursued by the Apostles seems to have been, as has been above remarked, to establish a great number of small (in comparison with most modern Churches) distinct and independent Communities, each governed by its own single Bishop, consulting, no doubt, with his own Presbyters, and accustomed to act in concurrence with them, and occasionally conferring with the Brethren in other Churches, but owing no submission to the rulers of any other Church, or to any central common authority, except the Apostles themselves. And other points of difference might be added.

Now to vindicate the institutions of our own or of some other Church, on the ground that they 'are not in themselves superstitious or ungodly,' that they are not at variance with Gospel-principles, or with any Divine injunction that was designed to be of universal obligation, is intelligible and reasonable. But to vindicate them on the ground of the exact conformity, which it is notorious they do not possess, to the most ancient models, and even to go beyond this, and condemn all Christians whose institutions and ordinances are not 'one and utterly like'[1] our own, on the ground of their departure from the apostolical precedents, which no Church has exactly adhered to, does seem—to use no harsher expression—not a little inconsistent and unreasonable.

Inconsistency of condemnations often pronounced by Christians on each other.

And yet one may not unfrequently hear members of Episcopalian Churches pronouncing severe condemnation on those of other Communions, and even excluding them from the Christian Body, on the ground, not of their not being under the *best* form of Ecclesiastical Government, but, of their wanting the very essentials of a Christian Church—viz. the very same distinct Orders in the Hierarchy that the Apostles

[1] See 34th Article.

appointed : and this, while the Episcopalians themselves have, universally, so far varied from the Apostolical institution as to have in one Church several *Bishops;* each of whom consequently differs in the office he holds, as to a most important point, from one of the primitive Bishops, as much as the Governor of any one of our Colonies does from a Sovereign Prince.

It is to be observed, too, that this is a point of difference, not only of some importance generally, but, in reference to the *ordaining* power of a Bishop, apparently most essential. For this, it seems reasonable to suppose, must have been assigned to a Bishop *by virtue of* his being the single *supreme Head* (on earth) of a distinct Church; since it is to such a one—to the supreme Governor of a Community—that the office naturally appertains of appointing subordinate functionaries. If, therefore, the Apostolical institutions were to be regarded as designed to be of universal and eternal obligation, on this hypothesis there would be a great doubt whether Bishops of the present day have any right to *ordain.*

It is remarkable that there are *Presbyterians* also, who proceed on similar principles; who contend that originally the distinction between Bishops and Presbyters did not exist; and, *consequently* (not that Episcopacy is not *essential* to a Church, but) that Episcopal government is an *unwarrantable innovation*—an usurpation—a profane departure from the Divine ordinances![1]

[1] If we look to Scripture alone, we find, on the one hand, Titus and Timothy entrusted with what may fairly be reckoned episcopal control over the Churches, respectively, of Crete and of Ephesus; and, on the other hand, we find this appointment of Timothy to have been apparently only *temporary.* And, looking to other ancient writings, we find Clement's Epistle evidently written as from a *Bishop* of Rome, to the Church at Corinth, as apparently *not* under a Bishop. This Epistle (confessedly very *ancient*) is considered by several competent judges as genuine; but even supposing it spurious, the forger would have been very unlikely to depart from the existing traditions concerning notorious facts. Had the episcopalian, or again, the presbyterian form of government been known to have been always *universal*, a contrary representation

Now whether the several alterations and departures from the original institutions were, or were not, in each instance made on good grounds, in accordance with an altered state of society, is a question which cannot even be entertained by those who hold that no Church is competent to vary at all from the ancient model. Their principle would go to exclude at once from the pale of Christ's Church almost every Christian Body since the first two or three centuries.

§ 21. Waiving however what may be called a personal argument, and supposing that some mode could be devised of explaining away all the inconsistencies I have been adverting to, still, if the essentials of Christianity—at least a considerable portion of them—are not to be found in Scripture, but in a supplementary Tradition, which is to be sought in the works of those early Fathers who were orthodox, the foundations of a Christian's Faith and Hope become *inaccessible* to nearly the whole of the Laity, and to much the greater part of the Clergy.

Appeal to the practice of the early Churches, an argument inaccessible to the great mass of Christians.

This, it may be said, is just as it should be, and as it must be; the unlearned being necessarily dependent on the learned, in respect of several most important points; since the great mass of Christians cannot be supposed capable of even reading the Scriptures in the original tongues, much less of examining ancient manuscripts.

Now this necessity I see no reason for admitting, if it be understood in the sense that the unlearned must needs take the word of the learned, and place implicit reliance on the good faith of certain individuals selected by them as their spiritual guides. It is in their power, and is surely their duty, to ascertain how far the assertions of certain learned men are to be safely relied on.

Supposed dependence on the word of learned men.

A blind uninquiring assent, however, as to *all* points connected with religion, is the natural result—whether

would never have been made by a person writing what he meant to be received as genuine.

the designed result or not—(to those who do not reject the Christian Faith altogether) of the inculcation of such principles as I have been speaking of. For if a man were directed to take *two* medicines, as being *both* essential for his health, he would most likely not take the pains to *analyse* the one, when it was out of his power to analyse the *other;* but would either take his physician's word for both, or at once reject both. So also, if men be taught that it is essential to their salvation to belong to a Church, formed on the exact model of the Primitive Churches, and that this model can be, and has been, completely ascertained by the laborious researches of a few eminent theologians, who have devoted their lives to the study—the mass of mankind being quite incompetent, either to make these researches for themselves, or even to judge of the competency and fidelity of their guides; they will be induced—if they trust these guides *at all*—to take their word for *everything* alike, and to forgo all inquiry as to anything pertaining to religion.

Doubtfulness of appeals to early Churches.

But when, in the case now before us, men do come to consider and inquire what the foundation really is on which they are told (according to the above principles) to rest their own hopes of eternal life, and to pronounce condemnation on those who differ from them, it cannot be but that doubt and dissatisfaction, and perhaps disgust, and danger of ultimate infidelity, will beset them, in proportion as they are of a serious and reflective turn, and really anxious to attain religious truth. For when referred to the works of the orthodox ancient Fathers, they find that a very large portion of these works is lost; some fragments, or reports of them by other writers, alone remaining: they find again that what *has* come down to us is so vast in amount that a life is not sufficient for the attentive study of even the chief part of it;[1] they find these Authors far from being

[1] Would not the ingenuous course be, for those who refer to the authority of 'The Fathers,' to state distinctly, 1st, *which* of these ancient writers they mean; and, 2ndly, whether they have *read*

agreed, on all points, with each other, or with themselves; and that learned men again are not agreed in the interpretation of *them;* and still less agreed as to the orthodoxy of each, and the degree of weight due to his judgment on several points; nor even agreed, by some centuries, as to the degree of *antiquity* that is to make the authority of each decisive, or more or less approaching to decisive.

Everything, in short, pertaining to this appeal is obscure, uncertain, disputable, and actually disputed, to such a degree that even those who are not able to read the original authors may yet be perfectly competent to perceive how unstable a foundation they furnish. They can perceive that the mass of Christians are called on to believe and to do what is essential to Christianity, in implicit reliance on the *reports* of their respective pastors as to what certain deep theological antiquarians have *reported* to *them* respecting the *reports* given by certain ancient fathers of the *reports* current in their times concerning apostolical usages and institutions! And yet whoever departs in any degree from these is to be regarded at best in an intermediate state between Christianity and Heathenism! Surely the tendency of this procedure must be to drive the doubting into confirmed (though perhaps secret) infidelity, and to fill with doubts the most sincerely pious, if they are anxiously desirous of attaining truth, and unhappily have sought it from such instructors.

Uncertain foundation of faith based on reports.

§ 22. But an attempt is usually made to silence all such doubts by a reference to the Catholic Church, or the 'primitive' or the 'ancient Catholic Church,' as having authority to decide—and as having in fact

these? For, a very large proportion, even of the higher classes, are far from being aware of the voluminous character of the works thus vaguely referred to: and being accustomed, when any one refers to 'The *Scriptures*,' to understand him as speaking of a well-known book, which they presume he professes to have read, it is likely they should conclude, unless told to the contrary, that one who appeals to 'The Fathers,' has himself read them.

Pretended decisions of the Catholic Church.

decided—as to the degree of regard due to the opinions and testimony of individual writers among the Fathers. And a mere reference such as this, accompanied with unhesitating assertion, is not unfrequently found to satisfy or silence those who might be disposed to doubt. And while questions are eagerly discussed as to the degree of deference due to the 'decisions of the Universal Church,' some preliminary questions are often overlooked, such as: When and where did any one visible Community, comprising all Christians as its members, exist? Does it exist still? Is its authority the same as formerly? or when and how was its authority suppressed or curtailed? And again, who are its rulers and other officers, rightfully claiming to represent Him who is the acknowledged Head of the Universal (or Catholic) Church, Jesus Christ, and to act as His *Vicegerents* on Earth? For it is plain that no society that has a *supreme Governor* can perform any act, *as a Society* and in its corporate capacity, *without* that supreme Governor, either in person, or represented by some one clearly deputed by him and invested with his authority. And a Bishop, Presbyter, or other officer of any particular Church, although he is a *member* of the universal Christian Church and also a *Christian Ecclesiastical Ruler*, is not a Ruler *of* the Universal Church; his jurisdiction not extending beyond his particular Diocese, Province, or Church, any more than a *European King* is King *of* Europe. Who then are to be recognised as Rulers *of* (not merely *in*) the Universal Church? Where (on Earth) is its central supreme government, such as every single Community must have? Who is the accredited organ empowered to pronounce its decrees in the name of the whole Community? And where are these decrees registered?

Yet many persons are accustomed to talk familiarly of the decisions of the Catholic Church, as if there were some accessible record of them, such as we have of the Acts of any Legislative Body; and, 'as if there existed some recognised functionaries, regularly author-

ised to govern and to represent that Community, the Church of Christ; and answering to the king, senate, or other constituted authorities, in any secular Community. And yet no shadow of proof can be offered that the Church, in the above sense—the Universal Church—can possibly give any decision at all; that it has any constituted authorities as the organs by which such decision could be framed or promulgated;—or, in short, that there is, or ever was any *one Community on earth*, recognised, or having any claim to be recognised, as the Universal Church, bearing rule over and comprehending all particular Churches.

No accessible records of Catholic decisions.

'We are wont to speak of the foundation of the Church, the authority of the Church, the various characteristics of the Church, and the like, as if the Church were, originally at least, One Society in all respects. From the period in which the Gospel was planted beyond the precincts of Judæa, this manifestly ceased to be the case; and as Christian Societies were formed among people more and more unconnected and dissimilar in character and circumstances, the difficulty of considering the Church as One Society increases. Still, from the habitual and unreflecting use of this phrase, "the Church," it is no uncommon case to confound the two notions, and occasionally to speak of the various societies of Christians as *one*, occasionally as *distinct* bodies. The mischief which has been grafted on this inadvertency in the use of the term, has already been noticed; and it is no singular instance of the enormous practical results which may be traced to mere ambiguity of expression. The Church is undoubtedly *one*, and so is the human race *one;* but not as a *Society*. It was from the first composed of distinct societies, which were called one, because formed on *common principles*. It is One Society only when considered as to its *future* existence. The circumstance of its having one common Head (Christ), one Spirit, one Father, are points of unity which no more make the Church One Society on

The Church-Universal, not a Single Society on Earth.

earth, than the circumstance of all men having the same Creator and being derived from the same Adam, renders the human race one family. That Scripture often speaks of Christians generally under the term "the Church," is true, but if we wish fully to understand the force of the term so applied, we need only call to mind the frequent analogous use of ordinary historical language when no such doubt occurs. Take, for example, Thucydides' "History of the Peloponnesian War." It contains an account of the transactions of two opposed parties, each made up of many distinct Communities; on the one side were Democracies, on the other Oligarchies. Yet precisely the same use is made by the historian of the terms "the Democracy" and "the Oligarchy," as we find Scripture adopting with regard to the term "the Church." No one is misled by these, so as to suppose the Community of Athens *one* with that of Corcyra, or the Theban with the Lacedæmonian. When the heathen writer speaks of "the Democracy of" or "in" the various Democratical States, we naturally understand him to mean distinct societies *formed on similar principles;* and so, doubtless, ought we to interpret the Sacred Writers when they, in like manner, make mention of the Church of, or in, Antioch, Rome, Ephesus, Corinth, etc.

'But there was also an especial reason why the term Church should have been often used by the Sacred Writers as if it applied to One Society. God's dispensation had hitherto been limited to a single society—the Jewish people. Until the Gospel was preached, the Church of God *was* One Society. It therefore sometimes occurs with the force of a transfer from the objects of God's *former* dispensation, to those of His *present* dispensation. In like manner, as Christians are called "the Elect," their bodies "the Temple," and their Mediator "the High Priest"; so, their condition, as the objects of God's new dispensation, is designated by the term "the Church of Christ," and "the Church."

'The Church is *one*, then, not as consisting of One

Society, but because the various societies, or Churches, were then modelled, and ought still to be so, on the same principles, and because they enjoy common privileges—one Lord, one Spirit, one Baptism. Accordingly, the Holy Ghost, through His agents the Apostles, has not left any detailed account of the formation of any Christian Society; but He has very distinctly marked the great principles on which all were to be founded, whatever distinctions may exist amongst them. In short, the foundation of the Church by the Apostles was not analogous to the work of Romulus, or Solon; it was not, properly, the foundation of Christian Societies, which occupied them, but the establishment of the principles on which Christians in all ages might form societies for themselves.

Unity of the Church, what.

'The above account is sufficiently established even by the mere negative circumstance of the absence of all mention in the Sacred Writings of any *one* Society on earth, having a Government and officers of its own, and recognised as the Catholic or Universal Church: especially when it is considered that the frequent mention of the particular Churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Corinth, etc.—of the seven Churches in Asia—and of "the care of all the Churches" which Paul had founded, would have rendered unavoidable the notice of the One Church (had there been any such) which bore rule over all the rest, either as its subjects or as provincial departments of it.

'This negative evidence, I say, would alone be fully sufficient, considering that the whole burden of proof lies on the side of those who set up such a claim. He who appeals to the alleged decisions of a certain Community, is clearly bound, in the first place, to prove its existence. But if we proceed to historical evidence, we find, on examination, that there *never was a time* when the supremacy of any one Church was acknowledged by all, or nearly all Christians. And to say they *ought* to have done so, and that as many as have refused such submission are to be regarded as schismatics and rebels, is evidently to prejudge the question.

'The Universal Church, then, being *one*, in reference, not to any one Government on earth, but only to our Divine Head, even Christ, ruling Christians by His Spirit, which spoke to them from time to time through the Apostles while these were living, and speaks still in the words of the Christian Scriptures, it follows that each Christian is bound (as far as Church authority extends) to submit to the ordinances and decisions—not repugnant to Scripture (see Art. xxxiv.) of the particular Church of which he is a member.

Church authority.

'If it were possible that all the Christians now in existence—suppose 250 millions—could assemble, either in person or by deputations of their respective clergy, in one place, to confer together, and that the votes, whether personal or by proxy, of 230 or 240 millions of these were to be at variance (as in many points they probably would be) with the decisions and practices of our own Church; we should be no more bound to acquiesce in and adopt the decision of that majority, even in matters which we do not regard as essential to the Christian Faith, than we should be to pass a law *for this realm*, because it was approved by the majority of the *human race*.'

Many persons are accustomed to speak as if a *majority* had some natural inherent right to control and to represent the *whole* of any assembly or class of persons. We are told of this or that being 'held by *most* of the early Fathers'; of the opinions or practices of 'the *greater part* of the members of the early Church'; of the 'decision of the *majority* of' such and such a council, etc. No doubt, *when other points are equal*, the judgment of a greater number deserves more consideration than that of a less; but a majority has no such controlling or representing power, except by express, arbitrary, regulation and *enactment;* and regulations as to this point differ in different cases. Thus, the *decision of a Jury*, in England, is their *unanimous* decision: in Scotland, that of *two-thirds;* a decision of the House of Peers is that of a majority of those who are (personally, or by Proxy) *present;* of the

No natural rights in a majority.

House of Commons, of a majority in a House of not less than *forty;* etc. And when there is *no* express enactment or agreement on this point, nothing can fairly be called an opinion or decision of such and such persons, except one in which they *all* concur. When they do not, we then look, not merely to the *numbers*, but also to the *characters* and circumstances of each party.

Many again are misled by the twofold ambiguity in the phrase 'Authority of the Catholic (or Universal) Church'; both 'Authority' and 'Church' being often employed in more than one sense. Authority, in the sense, not of *power*, but of a claim to *attention* and to deference (more or less as the case may be) belongs of course, to the 'Universal Church,' meaning thereby, not, any *single society*, but Christians generally throughout all regions; the 'Christian World,' or (in modern phraseology) 'the Christian Public.' Whatever is, or has been attested, or believed, or practised, by all of these, or by the greater part of them, or by several of those whom they may regard as the best and wisest among them, is, of course, entitled to a degree of attentive and respectful consideration, greater or less according to the circumstances of each case.

Ambiguity of the words 'Authority' & 'Church.'

It is in quite a different sense that we speak of the 'Authority,' for instance, of Parliament; meaning, of an *Act of Parliament*, regularly passed according to the prescribed forms, and claiming (if not at variance with the Divine laws) submission—compliance—*obedience;* quite independent of any *approbation* on our part.

It is worthy of remark too, that *Power* (or authority in that sense) in reference to *any particular act*, or decision, does not admit of *degrees.* A man may indeed have more or less power than another; that is, he may have rightful power to do something which another cannot; but with respect to any specified act, he either has the power, or he has it not. On the other hand, 'Authority' in the sense of a *claim to deference* admits of infinite degrees.

And yet one may find it asserted, as a matter that

admits of no doubt, and is to be taken for granted, as 'generally admitted, except by those trained in a modern school, that any particular Church, *owes obedience* to the Universal Church, of which it is a part.' Such assertions sometimes come from men of acknowledged learning; in reality far too learned not to be themselves well aware that there *never was*, since the days of the Apostles, any such Body *existing* as *could* claim, on the plea of being the recognised representative of the whole Christian World, this 'obedience,' from each particular Church; and hence, these bold assertions will often succeed in overawing the timid, in deceiving the ignorant and inconsiderate, and in satisfying the indolent.

Bold assumptions of authority for supposed Catholic decisions.

The temptation, doubtless, is very strong, especially for those who would maintain doctrines or practices that are, seemingly at least, at variance with Scripture; to make an appeal to a standard that is inaccessible to the mass of mankind, and that is in all respects so vague; to a vast and *indefinite* number of writers extending over a very long and *indefinite* space of time; and to avail oneself of the awe-inspiring force of sacred names, by exhorting men, in the apparent language of Scripture [1] (for no such passage really exists) to 'hear the Church!'

Awe inspired by appeals to an undefined authority.

§ 23. The readiness with which some persons acquiesce, at least profess to acquiesce, in supposed decisions of the Universal or Catholic Church, using the term in a sense in which it can even be proved that

[1] Our Lord directs His Disciples, in the event of a dispute between two individuals, to refer the matter, in the last resort, to the decisions of the Congregation, Assembly, or Church (Ecclesia); and that if any one *disobey* or 'refuse to hear,' as our translators render it) this, he is to be regarded 'as a heathen,' etc. ἐὰν τῆς ἐκκλησίας παρακούσῃ. Those who adduce this passage would, it may be presumed, have at least *preferred* bringing forward, if they could have found one, some passage of Scripture which does support their views.

no such Community ever existed on earth, and of General Councils such as, in fact, never met, and of Traditions several of which are such as to need proof, first how far they are genuine, and next, how far, if admitted to be genuine, they would be binding on all Christians: this ready acquiescence, I say, is the more extraordinary, when we consider that many of the points which are attempted to be supported by an appeal to such authority, do, in fact, stand in no need of that support, but have a firm foundation in Scripture, by virtue of the powers plainly conferred by Christ Himself on Christian Communities.

Appeals to supposed decisions, etc. of the Catholic Church, as superfluous as they are unsound.

Any forms, for instance, for public worship, and for the ordaining of Christian ministers, which 'contain' (as our Reformers maintain respecting those they sanctioned)[1] 'nothing that is in itself superstitious and contrary to God's Word,' are plainly binding, by Christ's own sanction, on the members of the Church that appoints them.

But some, it should seem, are not satisfied with a *justification* of their own ordinances and institutions, unless they can find a plea for condemning all those who differ from them. And this plea they seek not by endeavouring to show the superior expediency, with a view to decency, good order, and edification, of the enactments they would defend, but by maintaining the obligatory character of supposed apostolic traditions; and then they are driven, as I have said, to shift our own institutions from the foundation on a rock, to place them on sand.

Not only self-vindication sought, but also condemnation of others.

When one sees persons not content with the advantages they enjoy, unless they can exclude others, and, in the attempt to do so, 'falling into the midst of the pit they have digged for another,' it is hardly possible to avoid recalling to one's mind the case of Haman, and the result of his jealousy of Mordecai.

[1] Article xxxvi.

Reformers represented as appealing to Scripture and Tradition jointly.

Some persons have endeavoured, from time to time, to represent our Reformers as appealing to the practice of what is called the Primitive Church, and to the writings of the early Fathers, as the principal—or as one principal—ground on which they rest the vindication of their own decisions; and as taking for their authoritative standard of rectitude and truth in religous matters, not Scripture alone, but Scripture combined and 'blended with Tradition.'

Conduct of the Reformers in respect of their controversy with Romanists.

And it is very true that they do frequently refer (as it was perfectly natural they should, engaged as they were in controversy with the Romanists) to the records which their opponents appealed to, in order to show that the very authorities these last were accustomed to rely on, are in fact opposed to them. It was a fair and allowable 'personal argument';—*argumentum ad hominem*. They point out the proofs extant that many doctrines and practices which *had been made to rest on supposed ancient* tradition, were in fact comparatively modern innovations; and they vindicate themselves from the charge of *innovation* in some points by referring to ancient precedents. All this is perfectly natural and perfectly justifiable. But it is quite a different thing from acknowledging a decisive authority in early precedents, and in Tradition, either alone or 'blended with Scripture.' If any man is charged with introducing an *unscriptural novelty*, and he shows, first, that it is *not unscriptural*, and then (by reference to the opinions of those who lived long ago) that it is *no novelty*, it is most unreasonable to infer that Scripture-authority would have no weight with him unless backed by the opinions of fallible men.

The maxim of 'abundans cautela nocet nemini' is far from a safe one if applied without limitation. (See *Logic*, b. ii. ch. 5, § 6.)

It is sometimes imprudent (and some of our Divines have, I think, committed this imprudence) to attempt to 'make assurance doubly sure' by bringing forward

confirmatory reasons, which, though in themselves perfectly fair, may be interpreted unfairly, by representing them as an acknowledged *indispensable* foundation—by assuming, for instance, that any appeal to such and such of the ancient Fathers or Councils, in confirmation of some doctrine or practice, is to be understood as an admission that it would fall to the ground if *not* so confirmed.

No one would reason thus absurdly in any other case. For instance, when some bill is brought into one of the Houses of Parliament, and it is represented by its opponents as of a *novel* and unheard-of character, it is common, and natural, and allowable, for its advocates to cite instances of similar Acts formerly passed. Now, how absurd it would be thought for any one thence to infer that those who use such arguments must mean to imply that Parliament has no power to pass an Act unless it can be shown that similar Acts have been passed formerly!

If any Bishop of the present day should be convinced that such and such theologians—ancient or modern—have given correct and useful expositions of certain parts of Scripture, he could not but wish that the Clergy he ordained should give similar expositions; and he would probably recommend to their attentive perusal the works of those theologians. Now how monstrous it would be to represent him, on such grounds, as making those works a *standard of faith conjointly* with Scripture!

Of a like character is the very reference I have now been making to the documents put forth by those Reformers themselves. I certainly believe these to be in accordance with the principles above laid down as scriptural and reasonable; but I protest (and so probably would they) against 'blending with Scripture' the writings of the Reformers, to constitute jointly a rule of faith binding on every Christian's conscience. If any one is convinced that the doctrines and practices and institutions of our Church are unscriptural, he is bound in conscience to leave it.

Reference to the writings or procedure of any persons, no proof that their authority is put forth as decisive.

Standard really laid down by the Reformers.

Our Reformers believed, no doubt, that their institutions were, on the whole, similar to those of the earliest Churches: perhaps they may have believed this similarity to be greater than it really is; but what is the *ground* on which they rested the claim of these institutions to respectful acquiescence? On the ground of their 'not being in themselves superstitious, and ungodly, and *contrary to God's Word*';—on the ground of the 'power of each particular Church to ordain, and abrogate, or alter' (though not wantonly and inconsiderately) 'Church-rites and ceremonies, provided nothing be done contrary to Scripture.'

So also, they believed, no doubt, that the doctrines they taught, and which they commissioned others to teach, were such as had been taught by many early Fathers; and thinking this, they could not but wish that the teaching of the Clergy should coincide with that of those Fathers; but what was the *rule* laid down —the standard fixed on, for ascertaining what should be taught as a part of the Christian religion? It was Holy Scripture: not Scripture and Tradition, jointly, and 'blended together'; but the Written Word of God; nothing being allowed to be taught as an article of faith that could not thence be proved.

Again, they doubtless believed that there were early precedents for the form of Church-government they maintained, for the different Orders of the Ministry, and for the mode of appointing each. They believed, no doubt, as a fact, that the Apostles ordained ministers, and these, others, and so on in succession, down to the then existing period. But what was the basis on which they deliberately chose to rest their system? On the declared principle that 'those, and those only, are to be accounted as lawfully-appointed ministers who are called and sent out by *those who have authority* in the congregation' (or Church) 'to call and send labourers into the Lord's vineyard'; and though themselves deliberately adhering to episcopal Ordination, they refrain, both in the Article on the 'Church' and in that on

'ministering in the Church,' from specifying Episcopacy, and Episcopal Ordination, as among the essentials.

§ 24. Some *individuals* among the Reformers have, in some passages, used language which may be understood as implying a more strict obligation to conform to ancient precedents than is acknowledged in the Articles. But the Articles being deliberately and *jointly* drawn up for the very purpose of precisely determining what it was designed should be determined respecting the points they treat of, and in order to supply to the Anglican Church their Confession of Faith on these points, it seems impossible that any man of ingenuous mind can appeal from the Articles, Liturgy, and Rubric, put forth as the authoritative *declarations of the Church*, to any other writings, whether by the same or by other authors.[1] On the contrary, the very circumstance that

The Articles the Symbol embodying the deliberate decisions of our Church.

[1] Articles XIX. XX. XXIII. XXXIV. XXXVI.

'XIX. *Of the Church.*—The visible Church of Christ ["ecclesia Christi visibilis est," etc. evidently *A* visible Church of Christ is *a* congregation, etc.] is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

'As the Church of *Jerusalem, Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, have erred; so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

'XX. *Of the Authority of the Church.*—The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything *against* the same, so, *besides* the same, ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

'XXIII. *Of Ministering in the Congregation.*—It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them

opinions going far beyond what the Articles express, or in other respects considerably differing from them, did exist, and were *well known and current*, in the days of our Reformers, gives even the *more* force to their *deliberate omissions* of these, and their distinct declaration of what they do mean to maintain. It was not hastily and unadvisedly that they based the doctrines of their Church on 'the pure Word of God,' and the claim of their Church to the character of a Christian Community, on its being a 'congregation of believers, in which that pure Word is preached, and the Christian Sacraments duly administered.'

Distinction between what was believed by any of the Reformers and what was *agreed on* as essential.

Whatever, therefore, may have been the private opinion of any individuals among their number, they have declared plainly what it was they *agreed* in regarding as a safe and sufficient foundation, and as essential, and consequently requiring to be set forth and embodied in the Symbol or Creed of their Church.

But neither the Reformers of our Church, nor any

in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

'XXXIV. *Of the Traditions of the Church.*—It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like), as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

'Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.'

[It is quite evident from the context, that in this Article the expression '*the Church*,' means the 'particular Church' to which one belongs.]

'XXXVI. *Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.*—The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering

other human being, could frame any expressions such as not to admit of being explained away, or the consequences of them somehow evaded, by an ingenious person who should resolutely set himself to the task. And accordingly our Church has been represented as resting her doctrines and her claims on Scripture and Tradition *jointly* and 'blended' together.

Explaining away the decisions of our Church.

We have been told, for instance, of a person held up as a model of *pure Anglican Church principles*, that he 'submitted to the decisions of inspiration *wherever* it was to be found, whether in Scripture or Antiquity.' And again, we have been told that 'Rome differs from us as to the *authority* which she ascribes to Tradition: she regards it as *co*-ordinate, our Divines as *sub*-ordinate; as to *the way in which it is to be employed*, she, as *independent* of Holy Scripture; ours, as *subservient* to and blended with it; as *to its limits*, she supposes that the Church of Rome has the power of imposing new articles necessary to be believed for salvation; ours, that all such articles were comprised at first in the Creed, and that the Church has only the power of clearing, defining, and expounding these fixed articles.'

Now, whether the above description be a correct one, as far as regards the tenets of the Church of Rome, I do not pretend to decide, nor does it belong to my present purpose to inquire: but the description of the tenets of the Anglican Church is such as I feel bound to protest against. If indeed by '*us*' and '*our Divines*' is to be understood certain individuals who profess adherence to the Church of England, the above description is, no

The Anglican Church does not blend Tradition with Scripture.

of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering: neither hath it anything, that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, since the second year of the forenamed King Edward unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.'

doubt, very correct as far as relates to THEM; but if it be meant that such are the tenets of our Church itself, as set forth in its authoritative Confession of Faith—the Articles—nothing can be more utterly unfounded, and indeed more opposite to the truth. Our Church not only does *not* 'blend Scripture with Tradition,' but takes the most scrupulous care to *distinguish* from everything else the Holy Scriptures, as the sufficient and *sole* authoritative standard.

Grounds on which the Creeds are made to rest.

Our Reformers do not merely *omit* to ascribe to any Creed or other statement of any doctrine, an *intrinsic* authority, or one derived from Tradition, but, in the Article on the three Creeds,[1] they *take care distinctly to assign the ground* on which those are to be retained, viz. that 'they may be *proved* by *Holy Writ*.'

Traditional transmission of Ordinances and Institutions.

It has been alleged, however, that a less amount of Scripture proof ought to satisfy us as to the 'Divine appointment,'[2] and universal obligation of an *Ordinance* or *Institution*, than where the question relates to a *Doctrine;* on the ground that anything *external* might be handed down from Age to Age with far greater certainty than a doctrine. But though a doctrine is indeed more likely to be *totally forgotten* than an Ordinance or Institution, these last are quite as liable to be materially

[1] Nor, by the way, is it true that our Church has declared, in that, or in any other Article, 'that all such Articles as are necessary to be believed for Salvation were comprised at first in the [Apostles'] Creed.' This, in fact, is neither done, nor was intended to be done by the framers of that Creed; if at least they held—as I doubt not they did—*the doctrine of the Atonement:* for *this* is *not at all mentioned* in the Apostles' Creed. For though the 'forgiveness of sins' was, I doubt not, connected, *in their minds*, as it is in ours, with the Atonement, this connexion is so far from being distinctly *stated* by them, that the Creed may be recited by a Socinian. The cause of the omission, I have no doubt, was, that the doctrine had not in the earliest ages been *disputed*. But at any rate, the fact is certain; that the Creed does dwell on the reality of the historical transaction only, the actual *death* of Christ, without asserting *for whom* or *for what* He suffered death.

[2] See § 17.

altered by 'the insensible operations of the great innovator, Time,'[1] while the *names*, perhaps (as is generally the case), remain unchanged. Ages ago England was governed by King, Lords, and Commons; and if we had not more complete and accurate histories of our own country than we have of many ecclesiastical transactions, some persons probably would be unaware how greatly our Constitution at the present day differs from what it was under the Henrys. Again, the 'Extreme-unction' of the Church of Rome is an Ordinance derived from the apostolical practice of *miraculously healing* the sick, by anointing, though it is now administered exclusively to those whose recovery is hopeless.

The *title*, again, of Bishop is retained unchanged, though the office is so far altered from the earlier usage that instead of being, each, the supreme Head on Earth of a distinct Church, a Bishop is now only one out of many officers in the same Church. The title, again, of the Priests [Elders] originally appointed by the Apostles, remains, though the office has been, in most Churches—as in our own, before the Reformation—so completely changed into that of a sacrificing [Sacerdotal, or Hieratical] minister, that the very title of *Priest* (i.e. Presbyter, or Elder) has come to be ordinarily transferred to the Jewish and Pagan Sacerdotal Priests; who, of old, were never called Elders, any more than the title of Hiereus was applied to the Elders ordained by the Apostles. And the error thus introduced imperceptibly, as to the real character of the Christian minister is far from being eradicated from the minds of all, even in the Reformed Churches. And whether the deacons spoken of by the Apostle Paul had that office (which we know modern deacons have not) of Almoners and Stewards of the Church property, which was exercised by those SEVEN traditionally called deacons, and whether those 'Seven' were deacons at all, in the sense of the Apostle,—these are disputed points among the learned.

And many other instances might be adduced to show

[1] Bacon.

to how great a degree Institutions and Ordinances, as well as Doctrines, are liable to the uncertainties, and to the occasional corruption, of Tradition.

Distinction between traditional Doctrines and Institutions.

One distinction, however, there is between a *Doctrine* and an Institution, which ought not to be—as it often is—lost sight of: that any *Doctrine* which was really taught by the Apostles, though they may not have meant to enroll it among the essentials of the Gospel, must at least be *true* now no less than it was originally: of any *Institution*, on the other hand, which we believe them to have sanctioned, when they have not declared its perpetual obligation, we can only know that it was the wisest and best *at a particular time* and *place;* and it is not fair to infer from this that they designed to supersede for ever all exercise of the judgment, as to that point, of all Churches throughout the world.

But whatever conclusion we may come to as to the correctness of any traditional records, whether of a Doctrine or of an Institution, the question still recurs, is it credible that the Apostles should have designed to *entrust to the keeping of Tradition* any of the *essentials* of Christianity?

Pretended distinction between co-ordinate and sub-ordinate Tradition.

§ 25. As for the distinction drawn between making Tradition on the one hand 'an authority *co-ordinate with* Scripture,' on the other hand, '*subordinate and blended with* Scripture,' I cannot but think it worse than nugatory.[1] The latter doctrine I have no scruple in pronouncing the worse of the two, because, while it virtually comes to the same thing, it is more insidious,

[1] It is not meant to be implied that all persons who take this view are, themselves, disposed to join the Romish Church, or to think little of the differences between that and their own. Distinctions may be felt as important by *one* person, which may appear to *others*, and may really be utterly insignificant. The members, for instance (of the Russian branch at least), of the Greek Church, are said to abhor *image*-worship, while they pay to

and less likely to alarm a mind full of devout reverence for Scripture.

For when men are told of points of faith which they are to receive on the authority of tradition *alone*, quite independently of any Scripture-warrant, they are not unlikely to shrink from this with a doubt or a disgust, which they are often relieved from at once by a renunciation, in words, of such a claim, and by being assured that Scripture is the supreme authority, and that Tradition is to be received as its handmaid only—as not independent of it but 'subordinate and blended with it.' And yet if any or every part of Scripture is to be interpreted according to a supposed authoritative Tradition, and from that interpretation there is to be *no appeal*, it is plain that to all practical purposes this comes to the same thing as an independent Tradition. For on this system anything may be made out of anything. The Jews may resort whenever it suits their purpose (and often do), to an appeal to their Scriptures, INTERPRETED *according to their Tradition*, in behalf of anything they are disposed to maintain. I remember conversing some years ago with an educated Jew on the subject of some of their observances, and remarking, in the course of the conversation, that their prohibition of eating butter and flesh at the same meal rested, I supposed, not, like several other prohibitions, on the Mosaic written Laws, but on Tradition alone. No; he assured me it was prohibited in the Law. I dare say my readers would be as much at a loss as I was to guess where. He referred me to Exod. xxiii. 19.[1]

Tradition blended with Scripture the most dangerous.

In like manner, if an ordinary student of Scripture declares that he finds no warrant there for believing in the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and

pictures an adoration which Protestants would regard as equally superstitious.*

[1] 'Thou shalt not seethe the kid in its mother's milk.'

* And the same with the Coptic and most other Eastern Churches. —*Editor.*

Consequences of authoritative interpretations of Scripture by Tradition.

that he finds, on the contrary, our Lord Himself declaring that 'it is the *Spirit* that quickeneth' (giveth life); 'the *flesh profiteth nothing*,' he is told that Tradition directs us to interpret literally the words 'This is My body,' and that he must not presume to set up his 'private judgment' against the interpretation: and this, when perhaps he is assured by the same person, on similar grounds, that 'the whole Bible is one great Parable!'

If again he finds the Apostles ordaining Elders (Presbyters), and never alluding to any person, except Christ Himself, as bearing any such office in the Christian Church as that of the Levitical Priest (Hiereus), he is told, on the authority of Tradition, which he must not dispute, that Presbyter means Hiereus, a sacrificing Priest. Mahomet's application to himself of the prophecy of Jesus, that He would 'send another Paraclete' or Comforter, was received by his followers on grounds not dissimilar; that is, it was an interpretation which he chose to put on the words, and woe to him who should dispute it!

If, again, we find the whole tenor of Scripture opposed to invocation of Saints and Image-worship, we may be told that there is a kind of invocation of Saints which the Scriptures, as interpreted by Tradition, allow and encourage. And so on, to an indefinite extent; just as effectually and almost as easily as if Tradition had been set up independent of Scripture, instead of being 'blended with it.'

'Tradition' and 'Church interpretation' are made, according to this system, subordinate to and dependent on Scripture, much in the same way that some parasite plants are dependent on the trees that support them. The parasite at first clings to and rests on the tree, which it gradually overspreads with its own foliage, till by little and little it weakens and completely smothers it:

> Miraturque novas frondes, et non sua poma.

And it may be added that the insidious character of this system is still further increased if the principle be laid down without following it out at once into all the most revolting consequences that may follow, and that have followed, from its adoption. For by this means a contrast is drawn between the most extravagant, and a far more moderate system of falsehood and superstition; and it is insinuated that this favourable contrast is the result of the one being built on 'co-ordinate' and the other on 'subordinate' Tradition: the real difference being only that every usurped and arbitrary power is usually *exercised with comparative leniency at first*, till it has been well established. Let but the *principle* which is common to both systems be established, and the one may be easily made to answer all the purposes of the other.

Insidious character of a wrong principle not at first followed out into all its results.

Many, again, deceive both others and themselves by a misapplication, in respect of this and of several other points, of the precepts relative to the preservation of the 'golden mean,' and the avoiding of *extremes*. They congratulate themselves as safe from mistake because they 'do not go quite so far' as such and such a treatise, or person, or party:[1] and yet perhaps the 'VIA MEDIA' which they

Mistake respecting the Via media.

[1] Numerous instances, in various subjects, might be given, of the tendency towards this false and inconsistent middle course.

For example, some, who 'would not go quite so far' as to punish with *death* those who hold religious errors, would yet shun what they account the opposite extreme, of complete toleration, and admission to civil rights; as if the Civil Magistrate (supposing religious error does come within his proper province), could have any more right to *tolerate* heresy than theft or incendiarism. And some, again, though they 'would not go so far' as to deny *all* government-grants to a College in which a theology that they disapprove is taught, yet would make it a point of conscience to keep the grant so scanty as to prevent the institution from being respectable and well conducted.

In such, and in many similar instances, it is found that (as I have elsewhere remarked) a bad example does harm the most extensively to those who do *not* follow it; by *lowering their standard* of propriety, and leading them to fancy themselves in the true

adhere to will be found on examination to be an attempt to *stop short between the premises and the conclusion*—a medium between the *abandonment of a false principle*, and the adoption of *all* the consequences which legitimately follow from it. Thus, in the present case, if we once admit the principle that Church Tradition is entitled to *uninquiring acquiescence*, we have thereby virtually admitted it to be the Word of God; and if we then hesitate to follow it whithersoever it may lead, we are only manifesting our own inconsistency, and pronouncing self-condemnation.

Proved to whom? an important question.

And all this time the advocates of this authoritative Tradition may loudly proclaim that they require no assent to anything but what 'may be proved by Scripture'; that is, proved *to them;* and which, on the ground of *their* conviction, must be implicitly received by every man. It is most important—when the expression is used of 'referring to Scripture as the infallible standard'; and requiring assent to such points of faith only as can be thence proved, to settle clearly, in the outset, the important question, 'proved *to whom?*' If any man, or body of men, refer us to Scripture as the sole authoritative standard, meaning that we are not to be called on to believe anything as a necessary point of faith, on their word, but only on *our own* conviction that it is Scriptural, then they place our faith on the basis, not of human authority, but of Divine. But if they call on *us*, as a point of conscience, to receive whatever is proved to *their* satisfaction from Scripture, even though it may appear to *us* unscriptural, then, instead of releasing us from the usurped authority of Man taking the place of God, they are placing on us two burdens instead of one. 'You require us,' we might reply, 'to believe, first, that whatever you teach is *true;* and, secondly, besides this, to believe also that it is a truth *contained in Scripture;* and we are to *take your word* for both!'

middle course, because they do not deviate from it so glaringly as some others.

§ 26. I can imagine persons urging, in reply to what has been said, the importance of giving the people religious instruction over and above the mere reading of Scripture,—the utility of explanations, and comments,—and the necessity of creeds and catechisms, etc.; and dwelling also on the reverence due to antiquity, and on the arrogance of disregarding the judgment of pious and learned men, especially of such as lived in or near the times of the Apostles.

Alleged importance of human teaching.

It is almost superfluous to remark that nothing at variance with all this has been here advanced. The testimony of ancient writers as to the *facts* that such and such doctrines or practices did or did not prevail in their own times, or that such and such a sense was, in their times, conveyed by certain passages of Scripture, may often be very valuable; provided we keep clear of the mistake of inferring, either that whatever is ancient is to be supposed apostolical, or even necessarily *in accordance* with apostolical teaching (as if errors had not crept in, even during the lifetime of the Apostles); or again, that every practice and regulation that really had the sanction of the Apostles (and which, therefore, must be concluded to have been the best, *at that time*) was designed by them—when they abstained [see § 16] from recording it in writing—to be of universal and eternal obligation;—in short, that they entrusted to *oral Tradition* any of the *essentials* of Christianity.[1] And, again, the opinions of any author, ancient or modern, are entitled to respectful consideration, in proportion as he may have been a sensible, pious, and learned man: provided we draw the line distinctly between the works of Divine messengers inspired from above, and those of fallible men.

[1] And yet one may find persons defending this view by alleging that we have the Scriptures themselves by Tradition. Any one may be believed to be serious in urging such an argument, if it is found that he places as much confidence in the genuineness of some account that has been transmitted from *mouth to mouth by popular rumours* from one end of the kingdom to another, as in a *letter* that has been transmitted over the same space.

But what is the object (unless it be, to mystify the readers, and draw off their attention from the real question) of dwelling on truths which are universally admitted,[1] not only in theory but in practice, by Christians of every denomination? Catechisms, oral or written—expositions of Scripture,—religious discourses or tracts, of some kind or other, etc., are in use, more or less, among all. The utility, and indeed necessity, of human instruction, both for young Christians and adults, has never, that I know of, been denied by any Christian Church or Denomination. The only important distinction is between those who do, and those who do not, permit, and invite, and encourage, their hearers to 'search the Scriptures whether these things be so,' which they are taught by their pastors.

Paradoxes disguised as truisms.

It is to be observed, however, that what I am speaking of is a reference to Scripture, as the *sole basis* of the articles of necessary faith—the only *decisive authority*.

Distinction between what is *derived* from Scripture, and what is *conformable* to Scripture.

Some persons, while claiming reception for such and such confessions of faith, declare continually, and with much earnestness, that they are teaching nothing but what is '*conformable* to Scripture,' '*agreeable* to Scrip-

[1] It is no uncommon practice with some writers, to shelter (as in the present instance) some paradoxical tenet, when opposed, under the guise of a *truism;* and, when this has been admitted without suspicion, to unmask the battery as it were, and by a seemingly slight change, to convert a self-evident and insignificant truth into a dogma of fearful importance. Thus, for instance, when we are sometimes told, with much solemn earnestness, of the importance of holding fast 'the faith of the Holy Catholic Church,' this is explained as being 'what has been held by *all* Christians, *always*, and *everywhere*' ['quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus']; and of course no one can think of denying that what has always been held *universally* by all Christians as a part of their faith, must be a part of the *universal* [or Catholic] faith. There 'needs no ghost to tell us that'; as it is in fact only saying that 'Catholic' means 'Universal,' and that what is believed is believed. But when the wooden horse has been introduced, it is found to contain armed men concealed within it. 'All Christians' is explained to mean 'all the orthodox'; and the 'orthodox' to be those in agreement with the authors who are instructing us.

ture,' etc. And the unwary are often misled by not attending to the important distinction between this,—between what is simply *agreeable* to Scripture and what is *derived from* Scripture,—*founded* on it, and claiming no other authority.

When it is said that the Old Testament and the New are *not at variance*, but *conformable* to each other, this is quite different from saying that either of them *derives all its authority* from the other. On the other hand our Reformers do not maintain merely that the Creeds which they receive *are agreeable to Scripture;* but they are to be received *because* they may be proved from Scripture.

The distinction, as I have above remarked, is apparent only, and not really important, between those who require the acceptance of what they teach, independently of Scripture, and those who do refer to Scripture as the ground of their *own* conviction, or at least as confirmatory of their teaching, but require *their* interpretations of Scripture to be implicitly received; denying to individuals the right and the duty of judging ultimately for themselves. The real distinction is between those who do, and those who do not, recognise this right and duty. For if a certain comment is to be received implicitly and without appeal, it not only is placed, practically, as far as relates to everything except a mere question of *dignity*, on a level with Scripture,[1] but has also a strong—and as experience has abundantly proved—an increasing tendency to supersede it. A regular and compact *system* of theology, professedly compiled from Scripture, or from 'Scripture and Tradition blended together,'

[1] Among the Parliamentarians at the time of the Civil War, there were many—at first a great majority—who professed to obey the King's commands, as *notified to them by Parliament*, and levied forces in the King's name, against his person. If any one admitted Parliament to be the sole and authoritative interpreter and expounder of the regal commands, and this, without any check from any other power, it is plain that he virtually admitted the sovereignty of that Parliament, just as much as if he had recognised their formal deposition of the King. The parallelism of this case with the one before us is too obvious to need being dwelt on.

if it be that which, after all, we must acquiesce in as infallible, whether it accord or not with what appears to *us* to be the sense of Scripture, being more compendious and methodical than the Sacred Books themselves, will naturally be preferred by the learner. And all study, properly so called, of the rest of Scripture—(I say 'the rest,' because on the above supposition, such a comment would be itself a part of Scripture, infallible and Divinely inspired, as much as any other),—all lively interest in the perusal,—would be nearly superseded by such an inspired compendium of doctrine; to which alone, as being far the most convenient for that purpose, habitual reference would be made in any question that might arise. 'Both would be regarded, indeed, as of Divine authority; but the compendium, as the fused and purified metal; the other, as the *mine*, containing the crude ore.'

§ 27. The uses are so important, and the abuses so dangerous, of the instruction which may be afforded by uninspired Christian teachers, that it may be worth while still further to illustrate the subject by an analogy, homely perhaps and undignified, but which appears to me perfectly apposite, and fitted by its very familiarity to answer the better its purpose of affording explanation.

Use and abuse of human instruction.

The utility of what is called paper-currency, is universally acknowledged and perceived. Without possessing any intrinsic value, it is a convenient representative of coins and ingots of the precious metals. And it possesses this character, from its being known or confidently believed that those who issue it are ready, on demand, to exchange it for those precious metals. And the occurrence from time to time of this demand, and the constant liability to it, are the great *check* to an over-issue of the paper-money. But if paper-money be made a legal tender, and not convertible into gold and silver at the pleasure of the holder,—if persons are required to receive it in payment, by an arbitrary decree of the Government, either that paper *shall* be con-

Bullion and paper-currency.

sidered as having an intrinsic value; or, again, that it shall be considered as representing bullion, or land,[1] or some other intrinsically valuable commodity, the existence and amount of which, and the ability of Government to produce it, are to be believed, not by the test of any one's demanding and obtaining payment, but *on the word of the very Government* that issues this inconvertible paper-currency, then the consequences which ensue are well known. The precious metals gradually disappear, and a profusion of worthless paper alone remains.

Even so it is with human teaching in religion. It is highly useful, as long as the instructors refer the people to Scripture, exhorting and assisting them to 'prove all things and hold fast that which is right';—as long as the Church 'ordains nothing contrary to God's Word'—nothing, in short, beyond what a Christian Community is authorised, both by the essential character of a Community and by Christ's sanction, to enact; and requires nothing to be believed as a point of Christian faith 'that may not be declared'[2] (i.e. satisfactorily proved) to be taken from Holy Scripture. But when a Church, or any of its pastors, ceases to make this payment on demand—if I may so speak—of Scripture-proof, and requires implicit faith, on human authority, in human dogmas or interpretations, all *check* is removed to the introduction of any conceivable amount of falsehood and superstition; till human inventions may have overlaid and disfigured Gospel truth, and Man's usurped authority have gradually superseded Divine: even as was the case with the Rabbinical Jews, who continued to profess the most devout reverence for the Mosaic Law, even at the time when we are told that 'in vain they worshipped God, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'

Scripture proof to be produced on demand.

[1] This was the case with the Assignats and Mandats of France.

[2] The word 'declared' is likely to mislead the English reader, from its being ordinarily used in the present day in a different sense. The Latin 'declare,' to which it was evidently intended to correspond, signifies 'to make clear'—'to set forth plainly.'

§ 28. It is worth remarking also that the persons who make this use of Tradition are often found distinctly advocating the deliberate suppression, in the instruction of the great mass of Christians, of a large portion of the Gospel doctrines which are the most earnestly set forth in Scripture: as a sort of esoteric mystery, of which ordinary believers are unworthy, and which should be 'reserved' as a reward for a long course of pious submission. This system of 'reserve' or 'economy' is vindicated, by studiously confounding it with the *gradual* initiation of Christians in the knowledge of their religion, in proportion as they are 'able to bear it'; i.e. able and willing to understand each point that is presented to their minds: and the necessity of gradual teaching—of reading the first line of a passage before the second—and the care requisite to avoid teaching anything which, though true in itself, would be falsely understood by the hearers, is thus confounded with the system of withholding a portion of Gospel truth from those *able* and *willing* to receive it; —the system of 'shunning to set before men all the counsel of God,' and of having one kind of religion for the initiated few, and another for the mass of the Christian world. Very different was the Apostle Paul's Gospel, which he assures us, 'if it was hid, was hid from them that are lost' (men on the road to destruction, *ἀπολλυμένοις*), 'whom the God of this world hath blinded.'

System of reserve.

But the charge of teaching something different from what they inwardly believe, the advocates of this system repel, by alleging that all they do teach is agreeable to Scripture, although they withhold a part, and do not teach *all* that is to be found in Scripture: as if this did not as effectually constitute two different religions as if they had added on something of their own. For, by expunging or suppressing at pleasure, that which remains may become totally different from what the religion would have been if exhibited as a whole.[1]

Suppression of Gospel truths may amount to falsification.

[1] A striking instance of this may be found in a work published a few years ago, termed *Elucidations of Dr. Hampden's Lectures;*

It has been remarked that every statue existed in the block of marble from which it was carved; and that the Sculptor merely *discloses* it, by removing the superfluous portions;—that the Medicean Venus, for instance, has not in it a single particle which did not originally exist exactly in the same relative position as now; the artist having *added* nothing, but merely *taken away*. Yet the statue is as widely different a thing from the original block as if something *had* been added. What should we think of a man's pleading that such an image is not contemplated in the commandment against *making* an image, because it is not 'made,' as if it had been moulded, or cast, out of materials *brought together* for the purpose? Should any one scruple to worship a moulded, but not a sculptured image, his scruple would not be more absurdly misplaced than if he should hold himself bound, in his teaching, not to *add on* to Scripture anything he did *not* believe to be true, but allowed to suppress any portions of Gospel-truth at his pleasure, and to exhibit to his people the remaining portions, as the whole system of their religion.

It may be added also, that as a Christian teacher is not authorised either to suppress any portion of the Gospel as unfit for those disposed and able to receive it, or to inculcate as an essential portion of it anything not revealed in Scripture, but dependent on Tradition, whether alone or 'blended with Scripture,' so he ought not to insist on the acceptance, as essential, of anything which, even though it may be satisfactorily proved from Scripture, yet is so slightly hinted at there, that till attention has been called to it, and the arguments by which it is supported

Doctrines not clearly revealed.

in which by picking out a sentence here, and a half-sentence there, an impression was produced of the general tendency of the work totally different from what the work itself warranted.

Those who thus garble and misrepresent a man's expressions, in order to bring on him abhorrence and persecution from credulous bigots, may be regarded as the genuine successors of those tyrannical emperors who used to *dress up in the skins of wild beasts* their wretched victims the ancient Christians, and then set dogs at them to worry them to death.

brought together, whole Churches, for whole generations together, may have studied Scripture without finding it. I do not say that nothing of this character *should be maintained* and supported by arguments which may satisfactorily prove it, but it should not be *maintained as something necessary* to Salvation, unless it is *clearly* revealed to an ordinary reader of candid mind.

For instance, there are some who think that an intermediate state of consciousness—and others, of unconsciousness—between death and the resurrection, may be proved from Scripture; but I cannot think it justifiable to represent *either* opinion as an essential *article of faith*.[1]

Again, *the call of the Gentiles* to be partakers with the Jews of the privileges of God's people, and the *termination of the Mosaic dispensation*, are *contained*, but not *clearly* revealed, in the Old Testament, and in the discourses of our Lord; these doctrines are not so *obviously* contained there as to make them an essential part of the Jewish faith, or of the faith required of our Lord's followers while He was on earth. This, therefore, was a case in which a *fresh and distinct declaration*, supported by miraculous evidence, was fairly to be expected; and *this was accordingly afforded*. A distinct miraculous revelation was made to the Apostle Peter as to this very point.[2]

§ 29. In saying that the essential doctrines of Christianity are to be found in Scripture, or may be satisfactorily proved from it, and that the enactments of any Church, with a view to good government, 'de-

[1] See *Lectures on a Future State*, L. 2, 3, etc.

[2] According to our Lord's promise respecting the Holy Spirit:—'He shall teach you all thing, and *bring all things to your remembrance*,' etc. Our Lord's purpose in giving such obscure intimations as He did (in the parables, for instance, of the labourers in the Vineyard, of the Prodigal Son, etc.) of doctrines which were afterwards to be clearly revealed, was, doubtless, that the Apostles might then perceive that there was no *change of purpose*; but that the Gentiles had been, from the first, 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God.'

cency and order,' derive a sufficient authority *from that very circumstance*, inasmuch as the Apostle commands us to 'do all things decently and in order,' and our Heavenly Master has given power to 'bind and loose' in respect of such regulations, I do not mean to imply that such reasons always *will*, in fact, prove satisfactory to careless and uncandid reasoners—to the fanciful, the wilful, and the arrogant. But nothing is in reality gained by endeavouring to add force to sound reasons by the addition of unsound ones. To seek, when men will not listen to valid arguments, for some other arguments which they *will* listen to, will, I am convinced (to say nothing of its unfairness) be found in the end to be unwise policy.

Unsound reasons brought in aid of sound ones.

Yet I cannot but suspect that the principles I have been deprecating must have been sometimes maintained by persons not altogether blind to the inconsistent consequences they lead to, but actuated by a desire of impressing on the minds of the multitude not only an additional confidence in the doctrines of our Church, but also that reverence which is so often found to be deficient, for Church-institutions and enactments, and for regularly-ordained Christian ministers; and that they have been influenced by a dread of certain consequences as following from an adherence to what I have pointed out as the only sound and secure principles.[1]

[1] For instance, the view taken (see *Thoughts on the Sabbath*) of the Lord's Day, as a Church festival observed in memory of Christ's Resurrection on the 'first day of the week,' and not in compliance with the law originally appointing the Sabbath (whether the levitical, or, as some suppose, a patriarchal law), I have seen objected to, on the ground that 'men are apt not to pay so much deference to the enactments of the Church, as to express commands of Scripture.' That is to say, 'although this law be *not* really binding on Christians' (for, if it were, and the observance of the Lord's Day were a part of it, *that* would supersede all need of other arguments), 'yet it is advisable to teach men that it *is*, in order that they may be the more ready to observe the Lord's Day.' The Church, therefore, is to be represented—and that, to men who, by supposition, are inclined to *undervalue* Church authority—as having taken the liberty to *alter* a Divine commandment of acknowledged obligation,

For instance, it has been thought dangerous to acknowledge a power in any body of uninspired men to depart in the smallest degree from the recorded precedents of the earliest Churches, including (be it remembered by the way) those existing after the times of the Apostles, and therefore consisting, themselves, of uninspired men. And a danger there certainly is, a danger of the misuse of any power, privilege, or liberty entrusted to any one. The Christian course is beset by dangers. They are an essential part of our trial on earth. We are required to be on our guard against them; but we must never expect, here below, to be exempt from them. And there is nothing necessarily gained by exchanging one danger for another: the danger of erring in our own judgment for that of following imperfect, uncertain, or corrupted traditions.

Supposed danger of a power to modify ancient regulations.

But to maintain the right of any Community—a Church, among others—to establish, abrogate, or alter, regulations and institutions of any kind, is understood by some as amounting to an *approval* of everything that either ever *has* been done, or conceivably *might* be done, by virtue of that claim; as if a sanction were thus given to perpetual changes, the most rash, uncalled for, and irrational. But what is left to men's *discretion* is not therefore meant to be left to their *in*discretion. To maintain that a power exists is not to maintain either that it matters not how it is used, or again, that it cannot possibly be abused.

Men not always *right* in their use of their *rights*.

The absurdity of such a mode of reasoning would be at once apparent in any other case. For instance, the Senate, Parliament, or other legislative body of this or any other country, has clearly a *right* to pass or to re-

by changing the *seventh* day of the week for the *first* (besides alterations in the mode of observance) in compliance with a supposed tradition, that the Apostles sanctioned—which it is plain from Scripture they did not—this transference of the Sabbath. This is surely expecting an *unreasonable* deference for Church authority from men who, it is supposed, are unwilling to yield to it such a deference as is *reasonable*.

ject any proposed law that is brought before it, and has an *equal right* to do the one or the other. Now no one in his senses would understand by this that it is *equally right* to do the one or the other;—that whatever is left to the legislator's decision must be a matter of absolute indifference, and that whatever is to be determined by his *judgment* may fairly be determined according to his *caprice*.

A Church—and the same may be said of a State—may so far abuse its power, and exceed the just limits of that power, as to make enactments which a man may be bound in conscience to disobey; as for instance, if either an ecclesiastical or a civil Government should command men (as the Roman Emperors did the early Christians) to join in acts of idolatrous worship; or (as was done formerly towards the Saxon Clergy) to put away their wives. But this does not do away the truth of the general assertion that 'the powers that be are ordained of God'; that both civil and ecclesiastical Governments have a right to make enactments that are *not* contrary to religion or morality.

Abuse of power no argument against its existence.

And again, even of these enactments—such as a State or a Church does possess a right to make—it is not only conceivable but highly probable that there will be some which may appear to many persons, and perhaps with reason, to be not the very wisest and best. In such a case, a man is bound to do his best towards the alteration of those laws: but he is not, in the meantime, exempted from obedience to laws which he may not fully approve. For supposing his objections to any law to be well founded, still, as infallibility does not exist among men, all professions and precepts relative to the duty of submission to Government would be nugatory if that duty were to be suspended and remain in abeyance till an unerring Government should arise.

If any one, accordingly, is convinced that a certain Church is essentially unscriptural, either in the doctrines it inculcates or in the ordinances and religious worship it enjoins, he cannot with a sound conscience belong to

its communion. But he may consistently adhere to it, even though he should be of opinion that in some non-essential points it has adopted regulations which are not the most expedient. He may still consistently hold these to be binding, as coming from a competent authority, though he may wish that they had been, or that they should be, settled otherwise.

Difficulty of ascertaining unbroken succession.

§ 30. But as there are some persons who are too ready to separate from any religious Community on slight grounds, or even through mere caprice, to 'heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears,' it has been thought—or at least maintained—that the only way of affording complete satisfaction and repose to the scrupulous, and of repressing schism, is to uphold, under the title of 'Church principles,' the doctrine that no one is a member of Christ's Church, and an heir of the covenanted Gospel promises, who is not under a ministry ordained by Bishops descended in an unbroken chain from the Apostles.

Now what is the degree of satisfactory assurance that is thus afforded to the scrupulous consciences of any members of an episcopal Church? If a man consider it as highly *probable* that the *particular minister* at whose hands he receives the sacred ordinances is really thus apostolically descended, *this* is the very utmost point to which he can, with any semblance of reason, attain: and the more he reflects and inquires the more cause for hesitation he will find. There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up with any approach to certainty his own spiritual pedigree. The sacramental virtue (for such it is that is implied—whether the term be used or not—in the principle I have been speaking of) dependent on the imposition of hands, with a due observance of apostolical usages, by a Bishop, himself duly consecrated, after having been in like manner baptized into the Church, and ordained deacon and priest—this sacramental virtue, if a single link of the chain be faulty, must, on the above principles,

be utterly nullified ever after, in respect of all the links that hang on that one. For if a Bishop has not been duly consecrated, or had not been previously rightly ordained, his ordinations are null; and so are the ministrations of those ordained by him, and their ordination of others (supposing any of the persons ordained by him to attain to the episcopal office); and so on, without end. The poisonous taint of informality, if it once creep in undetected, will spread the infection of nullity to an indefinite and irremediable extent.

And who can undertake to pronounce that, during that long period usually designated as the Dark Ages, no such taint ever was introduced? Irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed we have even historical proof. Amidst the numerous corruptions of doctrine and of practice and gross superstitions that crept in during those Ages, we find recorded descriptions not only of the profound ignorance and profligacy of life of many of the clergy, but also of the grossest irregularities in respect of discipline and form. We read of Bishops consecrated when mere children; of men officiating who barely knew their letters; of Prelates expelled, and others put into their places, by violence; of illiterate and profligate laymen, and habitual drunkards, admitted to Holy Orders; and, in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder and reckless disregard of the decency which the Apostle enjoins. It is inconceivable that any one even moderately acquainted with history can feel a certainty, or any approach to certainty, that, amidst all this confusion and corruption, every requisite form was, in every instance, strictly adhered to by men, many of them openly profane and secular, and unrestrained by public opinion, through the gross ignorance of the population among which they lived, and that no one not duly consecrated or ordained was admitted to their sacred offices.

Informality common during the Dark Ages.

Even in later and more civilised and enlightened

times the probability of an irregularity, though very greatly diminished, is yet diminished only, and not absolutely destroyed. Not many years ago, an artful impostor, pretending to be a clergyman, came over from Canada, and succeeded in deceiving many persons in England and in Ireland. He was allowed to officiate in our churches, and he collected money for some pretended institution in Canada. He was not detected till, on his return to Canada, he came across some one who knew him, and exposed his fraud.

Possibility of informality never quite removed.

Some years before that, a pretended clergyman even obtained a curacy in Ireland, which he held for a considerable time: and it was found necessary, as I am informed, to pass a special Act of Parliament to give validity to the marriages he had celebrated.

Again, some years before this, an impostor deceived many persons in England, pretending to have lost his letters of Orders in a fire or in a shipwreck. But in order to quiet any suspicions, he pretended to write a letter to an Archdeacon of the diocese where he professed to have been ordained. He produced a letter, signed with the Archdeacon's name, and having the proper post-mark, certifying his ordination and containing a high eulogium on the admirable examination he had passed. This satisfied every one, except a single obstinate doubter who, to make quite sure, wrote himself to the Archdeacon, and received an answer saying that no such person had ever been heard of.

The man was afterwards transported for a forgery. And having soon obtained what is called a 'ticket of leave,' he was employed (being really an able man, and a scholar) as a *tutor* in the families of settlers.

All these cases occurred not many years ago.

Now if any one of these men had succeeded in carrying out the deception, he might, conceivably, have been raised to the episcopate, and have been the ordainer of an indefinite number of clergymen.

But some may say, all these impostors were *detected*. Of course they were; else they could not have been

now mentioned. Every *recorded* case of imposture *must* be one of detected imposture. But it would be very rash to conclude that because *some* impostures have been detected, therefore none can ever have escaped detection.

Now, let any one proceed on the hypothesis that there are, suppose, but a hundred links connecting any particular minister with the Apostles; and let him even suppose that not above half of this number pass through such periods as admit of any possible irregularity; and then, placing at the lowest estimate the probability of defectiveness in respect of each of the remaining fifty, taken separately, let him consider what amount of probability will result from the *multiplying* of the whole together.[1] The ultimate consequence must be, that any one who sincerely believes that his claims to the benefits of the Gospel Covenant depend on his own minister's claim to the supposed sacramental virtue of true ordination, and this again, on perfect Apostolical Succession as above described, must be involved, in proportion as he reads, and inquires, and reflects, and reasons, on the subject, in the most distressing doubt and perplexity.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the advocates of this theory studiously disparage reasoning, deprecate all exercise of the mind in reflection, decry appeals to evidence, and lament that even the power of reading should be imparted to the people. It is not without cause that

[1] Supposing it to be one hundred to one, in each separate case, in favour of the legitimacy and regularity of the transmission, and the links to amount to fifty (or any other number), the probability of the unbroken continuity of the whole chain must be computed as $\frac{99}{100}$ of $\frac{99}{100}$ of $\frac{99}{100}$, etc. to the end of the whole fifty.

Of course, if different data are assumed, or a different system is adopted of computing the rate at which the uncertainty increases at each step, the ultimate result will be different as to the *degree* of uncertainty; but when once it is made apparent that a considerable and *continually increasing* uncertainty does exist, and that the result must be, in respect of any individual case, a matter of *chance*, it can be of no great consequence to ascertain precisely what the chances are on each side. (See *Cautions for the Times*, No. 16.)

they dread and lament 'an age of too much light,' and wish to involve religion in 'a solemn and awful gloom.'[1] It is not without cause that, having removed the Christian's confidence from a rock to base it on sand, they forbid all prying curiosity to examine their foundation.

Fallacy of confounding together the Apostolical Succession of a body of men and of each *individual*.

The fallacy, indeed, by which, according to the above principles, the Christian is taught to rest his own personal hopes of salvation on the individual claims to 'Apostolical Succession' of the particular minister he is placed under, is one so gross that few are thoughtless enough to be deceived by it in any case where religion is not concerned;—where, in short, a man has not been taught to make a virtue of uninquiring, unthinking, acquiescence. For the fallacy consists in confounding together the unbroken Apostolical Succession of *a Christian ministry generally*, and the same Succession in an unbroken line, of *this or that individual minister*. The existence of such *an Order of men as Christian ministers*, continuously from the time of the Apostles to this day, is perhaps as complete a moral certainty as any historical fact can be; because (independently of the various incidental notices by historians, of such a class of persons) it is plain that if, at the present day, or a century ago, or ten centuries ago, a number of men had appeared in the world, professing (as our clergy do now) to hold a recognised office in a Christian Church, to which they had been regularly appointed as successors to others, whose predecessors, in like manner, had held the same, and so on, from the times of the Apostles,—if, I say, such a pretence had been put forth by a set of men assuming an office which no one had ever heard of before, —it is plain that they would at once have been refuted and exposed. And as this will apply equally to each successive generation of Christian ministers, till we come up to the time when the institution was confessedly new,—that is, to the time when Christian ministers were appointed by the Apostles, who professed them-

[1] Κλέπτῃ δέ τε νυκτὸς ἀμείνω.

selves eye-witnesses of the Resurrection,—we have, in the Christian ministry (as Leslie has remarked),[1] a standing monument of the fact of that event's having been proclaimed immediately after the time when it was said to have occurred. This therefore is fairly brought forward as an evidence of its truth.

But if each man's Christian hope is made to rest on his receiving the Christian ordinances at the hands of a minister to whom the sacramental virtue that gives efficacy to those ordinances has been transmitted in unbroken succession from hand to hand, everything must depend on *that particular* minister: and *his* claim is by no means established from our merely establishing the uninterrupted existence *of such a class of men as Christian ministers.* 'You teach me,' a man might say, 'that my salvation depends on the possession by *you*—the *particular* pastor under whom I am placed —of a certain qualification; and when I ask for the proof that you possess it, you prove to me that it is possessed *generally* by a *certain class* of persons of whom you are one, and probably by a large majority of them!' How ridiculous it would be thought, if a man laying claim to one of the Fellowships which, in certain colleges, are appropriated to the Founder's kin, should, instead of establishing his own pedigree, merely allege his being one of a number of persons bearing a certain surname, of whom it was believed that *probably*, a very large *majority*, and *perhaps*, *all*, were akin to the Founder! Such a claim would, in secular matters, be derided by all; including even those who would have us stake our Christian privileges on its validity.

But some have even gone so far as to maintain that our Lord's promise of being with His Church 'even to the end of the world,' and of 'the Gates of Hell not prevailing against it,' are to be understood as implying His especial interference to prevent any interruption of that kind of Apostolical Succession above alluded to; and that consequently we are bound to trust that no one

Strained interpretation of Scripture promise.

[1] *Short Method with Deists.*

can ever *appear* to possess true Apostolical Ordination who does not really possess it; and this, although we know, from the very warnings of the Apostles themselves, that, even in their own time, and even in respect of the vital truths of the Gospel, 'deceitful workers' arose, speaking perverse things, 'to draw away disciples after them'; and that as 'Satan transforms himself into an angel of light,' it is no marvel if 'his ministers also' are equally transformed.

Attempt to meet the difficulties of the doctrine.

Others again maintain that, though we are bound to regard as wholly void and worthless the ministrations of any one who is not (in the above sense) a rightful successor of the Apostles, and though it is impossible in the case of *each individual* minister to ascertain this with perfect certainty, still any one who receives the rites of the Church at the hands of those whom he *believes*, according to the *very best judgment* and *most perfect knowledge within his reach*, to possess the requisite qualification, will have *done his best;* and may, on that ground, hope for acceptance before his Divine Judge, trusting that he shall suffer no loss through any possible mistake that was wholly unavoidable.

And certainly, if any one should, after having used all possible care and precaution, administer to a sick man a poisonous dose, he would—although the patient would die, not the less—be acquitted of all moral blame. And so also, if he were transmitting to some distant country a cargo of Bibles, which were changed, through the fraud or negligence of an agent, for a parcel of worthless or noxious books, though the people receiving them would lose the edification designed, one may hope that the Divine goodness would accept, in respect of the sender, the will for the deed.

But then it should be remembered that if no *more* is required of a man than to do his utmost, he is also required to do no *less*. One who should administer a medicine *without* due care, even though it should chance to be the right one, would be no less morally responsible than if the same want of care had happened to produce a fatal result.

Whoever, therefore, puts in the plea of having *done his best* to secure the ministrations of one possessing the above qualification, ought, consistently with his own principle, to be (conditionally) *re-baptized, re-ordained, re-consecrated*, etc., again and again, as often as he has access to any fresh ministers: just as any one who is earnestly bent on conveying some most important intelligence to a friend in a remote part of the world will write by *every* ship likely to touch there, in order to make sure of leaving nothing undone towards effecting his object.

Re-ordination should be sought by those holding the doctrine.

We have here, therefore, a ready *test*, for judging whether a person who professes the above principle, and puts in the above plea, is really sincere, and heartily and practically in earnest, in his profession.

It has been alleged, for instance, that the chances of any interruption of Apostolical Succession are greatly diminished by the presence of *three* Bishops, instead of only one, at the consecration of a new one. And this admitted; but then it must also be admitted that the risk, how much soever *lessened*, is not, nor ever can be, *annihilated;* and moreover that it would be still *further*, and further, diminished by the presence of *four*, or five, and of any greater number, to an unlimited extent. And it is also evident that however minute the chance may ultimately be of any *actual* mistake, still this makes no difference as to the responsibility of those who put in the plea, not of actual avoidance of mistake, but of having done *their very utmost* to guard against it.

Chances of invalidity may be *diminished*, but never, on the above principle, done away with.

Those who hold that the presence of three or more Bishops is an appointment merely for the sake of decent and solemn publicity, need suffer no anxious doubts as to the validity of any public act performed according to the rules laid down in the Church. But one who regards the presence of the three Bishops as constituting some degree of *safeguard* against the *danger of nullity* that might result from some bygone informality, must

admit the *existence* of such danger, and also that it would be still further diminished (though never completely done away) by resorting to the ministration of fresh and fresh Bishops without limit. And this he clearly *is* bound to resort to, if he sincerely rests his justification, not on the extreme smallness and insignificance of the risk, but on his having *left nothing undone* to provide against it.

§ 31. Then as to the danger of Schism, nothing can be more calculated to create or increase it than to super-add to all the other sources of difference among Christians those additional ones resulting from the theory we are considering. Besides all the divisions liable to arise relative to the essential *doctrines* of Scripture, and to the most important points in any *system* of Church-government, Schisms, the most difficult to be remedied, may be created by that theory from *individual cases* of alleged irregularity.

Increased danger of Schism.

A most remarkable instance of this is furnished in the celebrated Schism of the Donatists, in Africa, in the beginning of the fourth century.[1] They differed in no point of doctrine or Church-discipline from their opponents, the Orthodox (that is, the predominant party); but were at issue with them on the question as to an alleged irregularity in the appointment of a certain Bishop, whose ordinations consequently of other Bishops and Presbyters, they inferred, were void; and hence, the baptisms administered by those ministers were also void, and their whole ministration profane; so that they re-baptized all who joined their party (as I believe the Greek Church does, to this day), and regarded their opponents in the light of heathen. And this Schism distracted the greater part of the Eastern portion of the Church for upwards of two hundred years.

Schism of the Donatists.

And an attempt was made in the last century, by the

[1] See Waddington's *Ecclesiastical History*, etc.

Non-Jurors, to introduce, in these realms, the ever-spreading canker of a similar Schism. They denied the episcopal character of those who had succeeded the displaced prelates; and, consequently, regarded as invalid the Orders conferred by them, thus preparing the way for all the consequences resulting from the Donatist Schism.[1]

Schism of the Non-Jurors.

The sect died away before long, through a happy inconsistency on the part of its supporters, who admitted the claims of the substituted Bishops *on the death of their predecessors;* though it is hard to understand how those who were not true Bishops at first could *become* such, through a subsequent event, without being re-consecrated; the Presbyters ordained by them becoming at the same time true Presbyters, though their ordination *had been* invalid. It seems like maintaining that a woman who, during her husband's lifetime, marries another man, and has a family, becomes, on her real husband's death, the lawful wife of the other, and her children legitimate.

More recently still, an attempt was made of the same nature, on the occasion of the suppression (as it was called) of some of the Irish bishoprics; that is the *union* of them with others.[2] It has been publicly and

[1] 'Dr. George Hickes, the deprived Dean of Worcester, who was regarded as the head of the Non-Juring clergy, being lately dead [1716], the publication of his papers revealed the intentions of his party respecting the Church, whenever the Stuart line should be restored. They held that all the conforming clergy were schismatic; and pronounced the invalidity of Orders conferred by Bishops made by usurping monarchs: consequently all baptisms performed by these schismatic divines were deemed to be illegal; and it was resolved that neither the one nor the other should be acknowledged, until the parties had received fresh ordination or fresh baptism from the hands of their own part of the Church, which had never bowed the knee to Baal.'—Bishop Monk's *Life of Bentley*, vol. i. p. 426.

[2] I do not mean to maintain that this was seriously believed by all those—some of them men of intelligence and learning—who put it forward. It may very likely have been one of their '*exoteric* doctrines,' designed only for the multitude. But, be this as it may, they evidently meant that it should be believed by others, if not by themselves.

distinctly declared that an effort was made to represent this measure as amounting to an 'interruption of Apostolical Succession'; though it is not very easy to say how this was to be made out, even on the above principles.[1]

In short, there is no imaginable limit to the Schisms that may be introduced and kept up through the operation of these principles, advocated especially with a view to the *repression* of Schism.

§ 32. Some have imagined, however, that since no rule is laid down in Scripture as to the *number* of persons requisite to form a Christian Community, or as to the mode in which any such Community is to be set on foot, it must follow that persons left to Scripture as their sole decisive authority will be at liberty—all and any of them, to form and dissolve religious Communities at their pleasure; to join and withdraw from any Church, as freely as if it were a club or other such institution; and to appoint themselves or others to any ministerial office as freely as the members of any club elect presidents, secretaries, and other functionaries.

Irregular formations of Christian Communities.

And it is true that this licence has been assumed by weak and rash men, who have thus given occasion to persons of the class who 'mistake reverse of wrong for right,' to aim at counteracting one error by advocating another. But so far are these anarchical consequences from being a just result of the principles here maintained, that I doubt whether, on any other subject besides religion, a man would not be reckoned insane who should so reason.

To take the analogous case of Civil Government; hardly any one in his right mind would attempt a universal justification of rebellion, on the ground that men may be placed in circumstances which morally authorise them to

Analogous case of Civil Government

[1] According to this view, the Apostolical Succession must have been long since lost in some parts of England, and the greatest part of Ireland. For there were many such unions existing *before* the Acts in question; such as Cork and Ross, Ferns and Leighlin, and several others.

do what, in totally *different* circumstances, *would* be rebellion.

Suppose, for instance, a number of emigrants, bound for some colony, to be shipwrecked on a desert island, such as afforded them means of subsistence, but precluded all reasonable hope of their quitting it; or, suppose them to have taken refuge there as fugitives from intolerable oppression, or from a conquering enemy (no uncommon case in ancient times), or to be the sole survivors of a pestilence or earthquake which had destroyed the rest of the nation; no one would maintain that these shipwrecked emigrants or fugitives were bound or were permitted to remain—themselves and their posterity—in a state of anarchy, on the ground of there being no one among them who could claim hereditary or other right to govern them. It would clearly be right, and wise, and necessary, that they should regard themselves as constituted, by the very circumstance of their position, a Civil Community; and should assemble to enact such laws, and appoint such magistrates, as they might judge most suitable to their circumstances. And obedience to those laws and governors, as soon as the Constitution was settled, would become a moral duty to all the members of the Community: and this, even though some of the enactments might appear, or might be (though not at variance with the immutable laws of morality, yet) considerably short of perfection. The King, or other Magistrates thus appointed, would be legitimate rulers, and the laws framed by them valid and binding. The precept of 'submitting to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake,' and of 'rendering to all their due,' would apply in this case as completely as in respect of any Civil Community that exists.

And yet these men would have been doing what, *in ordinary circumstances*, would have been manifest rebellion. For if these same, or any other individuals, subjects of our own or of any existing Government, were to take upon themselves to throw off their allegiance to it, *without* any such necessity, and were to pretend to constitute themselves an independent Sovereign-

State, and proceed to elect a King or Senate—to frame a Constitution, and to enact laws, all resting on their own self-created authority, no one would doubt that, however wise in themselves those laws might be, and however personally well-qualified the magistrates thus appointed—they would not be legitimate governors or valid laws: and those who had so attempted to establish them would be manifest rebels.

Extraordinary emergencies justify what would otherwise be wrong.

A similar rule will apply to the case of ecclesiastical Communities. If any number of individuals—not having the plea of an express revelation to the purpose; or again, of their deliberate conviction that the Church they separate from is fundamentally erroneous and unscriptural—take upon themselves to constitute a new Church, according to their own fancy, and to appoint themselves or others to ministerial offices, without having any recognised authority to do so, derived from the existing religious Community of which they were members, but merely on the ground of supposed personal qualifications, then, however wise in themselves the institutions, and however in themselves fit the persons appointed, there can be no more doubt that the guilt of Schism would be incurred in this case, than that the other, just mentioned, would be an act of rebellion.

Case of ecclesiastical Communities parallel.

Or again, if certain members, lay or clerical, of any Church should think fit to meet together and constitute themselves a kind of Synod for deciding some question of orthodoxy, and should proceed to denounce publicly one of their brethren as a heretic, there can be no doubt that—whether his doctrines were right or wrong—these, his self-appointed judges (whatever abhorrence of Schism they might express, and however strongly they might put forth their own claim to be emphatically the advocates of Church-unity), would be altogether schismatical in their procedure. If the Apostle's censure of 'those that cause divisions' does not apply to this case, it may fairly be asked what meaning his words can have.

On the other hand, men placed in the situation of the supposed shipwrecked emigrants or exiles above spoken of, would be as much authorised, and bound, to aim at the advantages of a Religious as of a Civil Community; only with this difference, arising out of the essential characters of the two respectively; that they would not be authorised in the one case, as they would, in the other, to resort to *secular coercion*. Compliance with civil regulations may, and must be, *absolutely enforced;* but not so the profession of a particular Creed, or conformity to a particular mode of worship.

Another point of distinction between the formation of a Civil and an ecclesiastical Constitution arises out of this circumstance, that it was plainly the design of the Apostles that there should be as much as possible of *free intercommunion*, and facility of interchange of members, among Christian Churches. Consequently, when it is said, here and elsewhere, that each of these is bound to make such enactments respecting non-essentials as its governors may judge best, it is not meant that they have to consider merely what would seem *in itself* best, and supposing *they* were the *only Christian Community* existing; but they must also take care to raise up no *unnecessary barrier* of separation between the members of their own and of other—essentially pure—Churches. Any arrangements or institutions, etc., which would tend to check the free intercourse,[1] and weaken the ties of brotherhood, among all Christ's followers throughout the world, should be as much as possible avoided.

Christian Communities designed to afford facilities for intercommunion.

This, however, is no exception to the general rule, but an application of it. For, those enactments which should tend to defeat, without necessity, one of the objects which the Apostles proposed, would (however good in themselves) evidently *not* be the best, for that very reason.

[1] As, for instance, if some one Church were to change Christmas Day to another part of the year, as being nearer to a correspondence with the time of our Lord's birth.

But it would be absurd to maintain that men placed in such a situation as has been here supposed are to be shut out, generation after generation, from the Christian Ordinances and the Gospel-Covenant. Their circumstances would constitute them (as many as could be brought to agree in the essentials of faith and Christian worship) a Christian Community; and would require them to do that which, if done *without* such necessity, would be schismatical. To make regulations for the Church thus constituted, and to appoint as its ministers the fittest persons that could be found among them, and to celebrate the Christian Rites, would be a proceeding not productive, as in the other case, of division, but of union. And it would be a compliance—clearly pointed out to them by the Providence which had placed them in that situation—with the manifest will of our Heavenly Master, that Christians should live in a religious Community, under such Officers and such Regulations as are essential to the existence of every Community.

Christians bound, when possible, to combine as a Christian Society.

To say that Christian ministers thus appointed would be, to all intents and purposes, real legitimate Christian ministers, and that the ordinances of such a Church would be no less valid and efficacious (supposing always that they are not in themselves superstitious and unscriptural) than those of any other Church, is merely to say, in other words, that it would *be* a real Christian Church; possessing, consequently, in common with *all Communities* of whatever kind, the essential rights of a Community to have officers and by-laws; and possessing also, in common with all *Christian* Communities, (*i.e.*, Churches) the especial sanction of our Lord, and His promise of ratifying ('binding in Heaven') its enactments.

It really does seem not only absurd, but even impious, to represent it as the Lord's will, that persons who are believers in His Gospel should, in consequence of the circumstances in which His Providence has placed them, condemn themselves and their posterity to live as

heathens, instead of conforming as closely as those circumstances will allow, to the institutions and directions of Christ and His Apostles, by combining themselves into a Christian Society, regulated and conducted, in the best way they can, on Gospel principles. And if such a Society does enjoy the Divine blessing and favour, it follows that its proceedings, its enactments, its officers are legitimate and *apostolical*, as long as they are conformable to the principles which the Apostles have laid down and recorded for our use; even as those (of whatever race 'after the flesh') who embraced and faithfully adhered to the Gospel were called by the Apostle 'Abraham's seed,'[1] and 'the Israel of God.'[2]

It could not have been the Lord's will that men should exclude themselves from His Church.

The ministers of such a Church as I have been supposing would rightly claim 'Apostolical Succession' because they would *rightfully hold the same office* which the Apostles conferred on those 'Elders whom they ordained in every city.' And it is impossible for any one of sound mind seriously to believe that the recognition of such claims in a case like the one here supposed affords a fair precedent for men who should wantonly secede from the Church to which they had belonged, and take upon themselves to ordain ministers and form a new and independent Church according to their own fancy.

Apostolical Succession dependent on adherence to apostolical principles.

§ 33. I have spoken of seceding from 'the Church to which they had belonged,' because, in each case the presumption is in favour of *that;* not necessarily in favour of the Church to which a man's *ancestors* may formerly have belonged,[3] or the one which can boast the greatest *antiquity*, or, which is *established* by the Civil Government. The Church, what-

Presumption in favour of the Church to which one actually belongs.

[1] Rom. v. 16. [2] Gal. vi. 16.

[3] Accordingly, if we suppose the case of the Romish Church reforming all its errors, and returning to the state of its greatest

ever it is, in which each man was originally enrolled a member, has the first claim to his allegiance, supposing there is nothing in its doctrines or practice which he is convinced is unscriptural and wrong. He is of course bound, in deference to the higher authority of Christ and the Apostles, to renounce its communion, if he does feel such a conviction; but not from motives of mere fancy or worldly advantage.

All separation, in short, must be *either* a *duty*, or a *sin*.[1]

All separation, either a duty or a sin.

And the Christian's obligation to submit to the (not unscriptural) Laws and Officers of his Church, being founded on the principles above explained, is independent of all considerations of the regularity or irregularity of the original formation of that Church: else, indeed, no one could be certain what were his duties as a member of a certain Church, without entering on long and difficult researches into ecclesiastical history; such as are far beyond the reach of ninety-nine persons in the hundred. A certain Church may, suppose, have originated in a rash separation from another Church on insufficient grounds; but for an in-

Obligation to conform to the ordinances of a Church not dependent on the regularity of its original formation.

purity, although we should with joy 'give the right hand of fellowship' to its members, it would be utterly unjustifiable for any member of our Church to throw off his allegiance to it and go over to the Church of Rome, on the ground of his *ancestors* having belonged to that; nor would such a reform confer on the Bishop of Rome any power over the Anglican Church.

[1] It may be necessary perhaps here to remind the reader that I am speaking of *separating* from and *renouncing* some Church; not, of merely *joining* and becoming a member of some other. This latter does not imply the former, except when there is some *essential point of difference* between the two Churches. When there is none, a man's becoming a member of another Church on changing his residence—as, for instance, a member of the Anglican Church, on going to reside in Scotland or America, where Churches essentially in agreement with ours exist—this is the very closest conformity to the principles and practice of the Apostles. In their days (and it would have been the same, always and everywhere, had their principles been universally adhered to) a Christian of the Church of Corinth for instance, on taking up his abode, suppose, at Ephesus,

dividual to separate from it *merely for that reason* would be not escaping, but incurring, the guilt of Schism.

It may indeed often be very desirable to attempt the reunion of Christian Communities that had been separated on insufficient grounds; but no individual is justified in renouncing, from motives of mere taste or convenience, the communion of the Church he belongs to, if he can remain in it with a safe conscience.

As for the question, what are and what are not to be accounted essential points—what will and what will not justify and require separation—it would be foreign from the present purpose to discuss it. The differences between two Churches may appear essential and non-essential to two persons equally conscientious, and equally careful in forming a judgment. All I am insisting on is, that the matter is one which does call for that careful and conscientious judgment. A man should, deliberately, and with a sense of deep responsibility, make up his mind as to what is or is not, to the best of his judgment, essential, before he resolves on taking or not taking a step which must in every case be either a duty or a sin.

Apprehension of what is called unsettling men's minds.

§ 34. It may be said, however, that it is superfluous to enter at all on the consideration of what *would* be allowable and right under some *supposed* circumstances, which are not our own; and to decide beforehand for some imaginary emergency that may never occur, at least, never to ourselves.

It may be represented as an empty and speculative question to inquire whether our ministry derive their authority from the Church, or the Church from them, as long as the rights *both* of the Church and its

where there was a Christian Church—differing perhaps in some non-essential customs and forms, but agreeing in essentials—was received into that Church as a brother; and this was so far from implying his *separation* from the former, that he would be received into the Ephesian Church only on letters of recommendation [Ἐπιστολαὶ συστατικαί. See 2 Cor.] from the Corinthian.

ministers are but acknowledged. And if any one is satisfied both that our ministers are ordained by persons descended in an unbroken series of episcopal ordination from the Apostles, and also that they are the regularly appointed and recognised officers of a Christian Community constituted on apostolical principles, it may be represented as impertinent to trouble him with questions as to *which* of these two things it is that gives them the rightful claim to that deference which, as it is, he is willing to pay to them.

It is in this way that the attempt is often made, and not seldom with success, to evade the discussion of important general principles, and thus to secure an uninquiring acquiescence in false assumptions which will not stand the test of examination, and which when once admitted will lead to very important and very mischievous practical results. Why should we unsettle men's minds—one may hear it said—by speculations on any imaginary or impossible case, when they are satisfied as they are? As long as any one will but believe and do what he ought, what matters it whether his reasons for acquiescence are the most valid or not? And then, when in this way men's minds have been 'settled' in false notions, some of them are likely to follow out a wrong principle into the pernicious consequences to which it fairly leads; and others again become most dangerously, and perhaps incurably *un*settled, when the sandy foundation they have been taught to build on happens to be washed away.

Real danger of unsettling men's minds.

If, as has been above remarked, a man is taught that view of Apostolical Succession which makes everything depend on the unbroken series between the Apostles and the *individual* minister from whom each man receives the sacraments, or the individual bishop conferring ordination—a fact which never can be ascertained with certainty; and he is then presented with proofs, *not* of *this*, but of a different fact instead—the Apostolical Succession, generally, of the great body of the ministers of his Church—and if he is taught to acquiesce with consolatory confidence in

the regulations and ordinances of the Church, not on such grounds as have been above laid down, but on the ground of their exact conformity to the model of the 'ancient Church,' which exact conformity is, in many cases, more than can be satisfactorily proved, and in some can be easily *dis*proved, the result of the attempt so to settle men's minds must be, with many, the most distressing doubt and perplexity.

And others again, when taught to 'blend with Scripture,' as a portion of Revelation, the traditions of the first three, or first four, or first seven, or fifteen centuries, may find it difficult to understand when, and where, and why they are to stop short abruptly in the application of the principles they have received:—why, if *one* General Council is to be admitted as having Divine authority to bind the conscience, and supersede private judgment, *another* is to be rejected by private judgment; and that, too, by the judgment of men who are not agreed with each other, or even with themselves, whether the Council of Trent, for instance, is to be regarded as the beginning of the Romish Apostasy, or as a promising omen of improvement in the Church of Rome. That man must be strangely constituted who can find consolatory security for his faith in such a guide—who can derive satisfactory confidence from the oracles of a Proteus!

§ 35. Moreover, the supposed case of Christians deprived of a regular succession of episcopally-ordained ministers, and left to determine what course they ought, under such circumstances, to take, is *not* inconceivable, or impossible, or unprecedented, nor again, *even if it were*, would the consideration of such a question be necessarily an unprofitable speculation; because it will often happen that by putting a supposed case (even when such as could not possibly occur) we can the most easily and most clearly ascertain on what *principle* a person is acting. Thus when Plato puts the impos-

Supposed case, neither an impossible one, nor useless even if it were.

sible case of your possessing the ring of Gyges, which, according to the legend, could make the bearer invisible, and demands how you would then act, he applies a kind of test, which *decomposes*, as the chemists say, the complex mass of motives that may influence a man, and calls on you to consider whether you abstain from bad actions through fear of the censure of the world, or from abhorrence of evil in itself.

So again—to take another instance—if any one is asked how men ought to act when living under a Government professing, and enforcing under penalties, a false religion, and requiring of its subjects idolatrous worship, and other practices contrary to Scripture, if he should object to the question, on the ground that there is no prospect of *his* being so circumstanced, and that he is living, and may calculate on continuing to live, under a Government which inculcates a true religion, it would be justly inferred that he was conscious of something unsound in his principles, from his evading a test that goes to ascertain whether he regards religious truth and the command of God as things to be adhered to at all events, or merely, when coinciding with the requisitions of Government.

Case of coincidence in the conclusions resulting from different principles.

So also, in the present case: when a Church possesses ministers who are the regularly appointed officers of a Christian Community constituted on evangelical principles, and who are also ordained by persons descended in an unbroken series from those ordained by the Apostles, the two circumstances *coincide*, on which, according to the two different principles, respectively, above treated of, the legitimacy and apostolical commission of Christian ministers may be made to depend. Now in order to judge fairly and to state clearly the decision *which* foundation we resolve to rest on, it is requisite to propose a case (even supposing—which is very far from being the fact—that it could not actually occur) in which these two circumstances do *not* come together; and then to pronounce which it is that we regard as essential.

§ 36. As a matter of fact, there can be no reasonable doubt that the Apostles did 'ordain Elders in every city.' Even if there had been no record of their doing so, we might have inferred it from the very fact of their instituting Christian Societies; since every Society must have officers; and the founder of a Society will naturally take upon him to nominate the first officers: as well as to 'set in order the rest' of the appointments.[1] And those officers, acting in the name and on the behalf of the Community, would, of course, appoint others to aid, and to succeed them; and so on, from generation to generation. As long as everything went on correctly in each Church, and its doctrines and practices remained sound, there would be nothing to interrupt this orderly course of things. But whenever it happened that the Rulers of any Church departed from the Christian faith and practice which it is their business to preserve—when, for instance, they corrupted their worship with superstitions, made a traffic of 'indulgences,' and taught for doctrines the commandments of men, by 'blending' human traditions with Scripture, and making them, either wholly or in part, the substitute, as a rule of faith, for the records of inspiration—in any such case it became the duty of all those who perceived the inroads of such errors to aim at the reformation of them; and, when all or any of the spiritual pastors of such a Church obstinately stood out against reform, to throw off their subjection to persons so abusing their sacred office, and, at all events, reform themselves as they best could.[2] It is as plain a duty for men so circumstanced to obey their Heavenly Master, and forsake those who have apostatised from Him, as it would be for the loyal

Cases of a moral necessity for separation.

[1] 1 Cor.

[2] It may be worth while to observe that a person who disapproves of persecution is *not*, on that ground alone, justified in separating from a Church *in behalf of which* persecution has been employed; for on such a principle he would be required to renounce Christianity itself. It is for him to protest against it, and to endeavour to prevent it; and if, for so doing, his Church should excommunicate him, the act would then be entirely theirs and not his.

portion of a garrison of soldiers to revolt from a general who had turned traitor to his King, and was betraying the city into the enemy's hands. So far from being rebellious subjects in *thus* revolting, they would be guilty of rebellion if they did not.

Independence conferred by circumstances.

In like manner, the very circumstances in which such a body of reformers, as I have been alluding to, are placed, confer on them that independence which they would have been unjustifiable in assuming wantonly. The right is bestowed, and the duty imposed on them, of separation from the unreformed, which, under opposite circumstances, would have been schismatical. They are authorised, and bound by the very nature of their situation, either to subsist as a distinct Community or to join some other Church;[1] even as the vitality which Nature has conferred on a scion of a tree enables it, *when cut off* from the parent-stock, either to push forth fresh roots of its own, or to unite, as a graft, with the stock of some kindred tree.

Conduct suitable for conscientious seceders.

It is for men so circumstanced to do their best according to their own deliberate judgment to meet their difficulties, to supply their deficiencies, and to avail themselves of whatever advantages may lie within their reach. If they have among their number Christian ministers of several Orders or of one Order—if they can obtain a supply of such from some other sound Church—or if they can unite themselves to such a Church with advantage to the great ultimate objects for which Churches were originally instituted—all these are advantages not to be lightly thrown away. But the unavoidable absence of any of these advantages, not only is not to be imputed to them as a matter of blame, but, by imposing

[1] An instance of this was afforded by the people of Zillerthal, in the Austrian dominions, who, being deliberately convinced of the errors of the church in which they had been brought up, underwent, in consequence of their refusal of compliance, a long series of vexatious persecution, and ultimately forsook their home, and found refuge and freedom of conscience in the territory of Prussia.

the *necessity*, creates the *right*, and the *duty*, of supplying their deficiencies as they best can. Much as they may regret being driven to the alternative, they ought not to hesitate in their decision, when their choice lies between adherence to the human Governors of a Church and to its Divine Master—between 'the form of godliness, and the power thereof;'—between the means and the end—between unbroken Apostolical Succession of individuals and uncorrupted Gospel-principles.

§ 37. Persons so situated ought to be on their guard against two opposite mistakes: the one is, to underrate the privileges of a Christian Community, by holding themselves altogether debarred from the exercise of such powers as naturally and essentially belong to every Community; the other mistake is to imagine that whatever they have an undoubted *right* to do they would necessarily be *right* in doing. In no other subject perhaps would such a confusion of thought be likely to arise as is implied by the confounding together of things so different as these two. Although the legislature (as I have above remarked) has an undoubted right to pass, or to reject, any Bill, a man would be deemed insane who should thence infer that they are *equally right* in doing either the one or the other. So also the Governors of a Church are left, in respect of ordinances and regulations not prescribed or forbidden in Scripture, to their own judgment; but they are bound to act according to the *best* of their judgment. What is left to their discretion is not therefore left to their caprice; nor are they to regard every point that is not *absolutely essential* as therefore *absolutely indifferent*.

Mistakes to be guarded against by Reformers when compelled to separation.

They have an undoubted right, according to the principles I have been endeavouring to establish, to appoint such Orders of Christian ministers, and to allot to each such functions as they judge most conducive to the great ends of the Society; they may assign to the *whole*, or to a *portion* of these, the office of ordaining others

as their successors; they may appoint *one* superintendent of the rest, or *several*, under the title of Patriarch, Archbishop, Bishop, Moderator, or any other that they may prefer; they may make the appointment of them for life, or for a limited period—by election or by rotation—with a greater or a less extensive jurisdiction; and they have a similar discretionary power with respect to Liturgies, Festivals, Ceremonies, and whatever else is left at large in the Scriptures.

Province of discretion.

Now to infer that all possible determinations of all these and similar points would be equally expedient and equally wise and good, would be an absurdity so gross that in no other case not connected with religion would men need even to be warned against it. In fact, it would go to do away the very existence of any such attributes as 'wisdom,' 'prudence,' 'discretion,' 'judgment,' etc., altogether; for there is evidently no room for the exercise of them in matters *not* left to our *choice*, and in which the course we are to pursue is decided *for* us, and distinctly marked out by a higher authority; nor again is there any room for them in matters where there is not a right and a wrong—a better and a worse, and where the decision is a matter of total indifference; as in the choice between two similar sheets of paper to begin writing on, when both are lying within one's reach. The *sole* province of prudent and cautious deliberation is in cases which *are* left to our decision, and in which we may make a *better or a worse* decision.

And yet I should not wonder if some persons were to take for granted that any one who does not presume at once to exclude from the Gospel-covenant all professed Christians who do not strictly conform to what we regard as the purest primitive practice, and to deny altogether the validity of all their ordinances, must, as a matter of course, place *exactly on a level* a system founded on the most diligent, sober, and deliberate inquiry after ancient and well-tried models, and the most rash, ill-advised, and fanciful innovations that ever were devised by ignorance or presumption. As well might one infer from

the Apostle's declaration that 'the Powers that be are ordained of God,' his complete approval of the Constitution of the Roman Empire, of its laws, and of the mode of appointing Emperors; or his total indifference as to the best or the worst system of Civil Government. If all laws were equally good, or if wise laws or unwise were a matter of indifference, or if it did not rest with each Government to make either wise or unwise enactments, what room could there be for political *wisdom?*

Instances of the above mistakes.

The mistakes, however, which I have been alluding to have been not unfrequently made in what relates to the powers possessed by Christian Communities, and the mode of exercising these powers. For instance, at the time of the great Reformation, some bodies of Christians found themselves without any Bishop among their number, and formed what are called Presbyterian Churches. Some members accordingly of these Churches have felt themselves called upon in self-defence to decry episcopacy as a form of Government not instituted by the Apostles, and *consequently*, as one which all Christians were *bound to reject*. Erroneous as, I am convinced, their premiss was, they were, on the above principles, still more erroneous in drawing that conclusion from it. Others of them again lamented their want of episcopacy; considering that form of Government as *having* the apostolical sanction, and *consequently*, as *obligatory* and *indispensable* to be retained, when possible; but to them *unattainable*, from the interruption of episcopal succession. And while some presume to exclude all Presbyterians from the pale of Christ's universal Church—professing at the same time, in words, what they virtually nullify by their interpretations, that 'Holy Scripture contains all things *necessary to salvation*'—others again compassionate and sympathise with the supposed *unavoidable* deficiency in the Presbyterian Churches.

Now that all these parties are mistaken in their views (though a mere mistake, when not accompanied with a want of charity, is not deserving of severe censure) must

be evident to any one who embraces the principles which in the outset I endeavoured to establish. It follows from those principles, that the bodies of Christians we have been speaking of *had* full power to retain, or to restore, or to originate, whatever form of Church-government they, in their deliberate and cautious judgment, might deem best for the time, and country, and persons, they had to deal with; whether exactly similar, or not, to those introduced by the Apostles, provided nothing were done contrary to Gospel-precepts and principles. They were, therefore, perfectly at liberty to appoint Bishops, *even if they had none* that had joined in the Reformation; or to discontinue the appointment, *even if they had:* whichever they were convinced was the most conducive, under existing circumstances, to the great objects of all Church-government. And though their decision of this point ought to have been very greatly influenced by their belief as to what were the forms adopted by the Apostles (which must have been not only wise, but the very wisest, *for those times and persons*) they had no reason to hold themselves *absolutely bound* to adhere, always and everywhere, to those original models.

Instances of departure from the apostolical model.

Indeed, to so considerable a degree have all Churches judged themselves at liberty to depart from the exact model of the earliest institutions, especially (as I formerly remarked) in respect of that important change introduced—whether wisely or unwisely—by, I believe, all of what are called episcopal Churches—that of having several Bishops in one Church, instead of making each diocese (as appears to have been the apostolical system) an entire and distinct Church;[1]—so

[1] Some who agree with me in not regarding a strict adherence to the earliest models as absolutely *essential*, yet would have *preferred*, in this point, a closer conformity to it. They believe—and not, I think, without reason—that if each diocese had been left, as at first, a distinct Church, dissensions among Christians, and disagreements in essentials, and corruptions of Christianity, would have been not increased by such a system, but rather, in some degree prevented.

Be this, however, as it may, it does seem strange to find those

considerable, I say, is the liberty in this respect, that has been assumed by all Churches, that those who speak of all Christians being strictly bound to conform in every point to the exact pattern of the primitive institutions, can hardly wonder if they find imputed to them either great want of knowledge, or of reflection, in themselves, or else, a design to take advantage of the ignorance or inattention of others.

§ 38. I have specified the want of 'attentive reflection' in applying rightly in practice the knowledge men do possess, as tending to foster erroneous notions, because it is probably both a more common and more dangerous defect than mere want of sufficient *knowledge*. And it may be added that it arises not so often from original deficiency in the mental powers as from neglect to exercise them. There are many who inadvertently, and not a few who advisedly and designedly, resign themselves, in all matters pertaining to morals or religion, to the impressions produced on their imagination and feelings; and rather applaud than reproach themselves for not awaiting the decisions of calm judgment, or for allowing their judgment to be biassed. To such persons there is, it must be acknowledged, something very captivating and seductive in the notions I have been censuring; and not the less, from their being somewhat vague, and dimly apprehended, incapable of abiding the test of sober examination, and invested with some of that 'mysterious and solemn gloom' which has been put forth expressly by some of their advocates as a recommendation. There is something to many minds awfully and mystically sublime in the idea of the 'decisions of the Catholic Church,' and of

Erroneous views seductive to the feelings and imagination.

who would have *preferred* a closer adherence to the apostolical model—though not holding it to be imperatively *necessary*—*censured* for their tenets by some who are *content* to live under a different kind of episcopal government; one that *departs* from that precedent which they blame the others for not regarding as of universal and absolute obligation!

'Catholic Councils, convened in the name of Christ, and whose deliberations are overruled, and their decrees authoritative.' There is something imposing in the idea of the 'sacramental character of ordination,' conferred by persons who have derived a mystical virtue from the successive imposition of hands up to the times of the Apostles—and of the 'priestly' or 'sacerdotal' character (that of Hiereus) thus imparted, and the 'sacrifices' offered at an 'altar'—of a 'primitive doctrine always to be found somewhere in the Catholic Traditions,' etc. And such feelings are strengthened when these matters are treated of in solemn and imposing language, of that peculiar kind of dazzling mistiness whose effect is to convey, *at first*, to ordinary readers, a striking impression, with an appearance of being perfectly intelligible at the first glance, but to become more obscure and doubtful at the *second* glance, and more and more so the more attentively it is studied by a reader of clear understanding; so as to leave him utterly in doubt, at the last, which of several meanings it is meant to convey, or whether any at all.

The rule of 'omne ignotum pro mirifico,' applies most emphatically to such doctrines treated of in such language. The very simplicity and plainness of the reasoning by which, in the foregoing pages, the Divine authority of a Christian Church, and consequently of its regulations and its ministers, are deduced direct from the anction given by Christ Himself as interpreted by His Apostles, is likely to be, to some minds, no recommendation, but the contrary.

Views likely to mislead the clergy.

And as men are of course less likely to exercise a clear and unbiassed judgment in respect of any theory which tends especially to exalt their own persons, and invest them with mysterious powers and awful dignity, the *clergy* accordingly are under a peculiar temptation[1] to lean too

[1] The minds of many persons among the Laity are so constituted as to make the same temptation very little less powerful to them than to the Priesthood, for reasons set forth in the *Essay* (3rd

favourably, and with too little of rigorous examination, towards a system which confers the more elevation and grandeur on *them*, in proportion as it detracts from the claims of the entire Community. It is not the most flattering to them to be urged to say continually not only in words, but by their conduct, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and us, your servants for Jesus' sake'—to be taught and to teach that they are merely the functionaries of the particular Church of which they are members—that it is in that capacity only that they derive their station and power from Christ, by virtue of the sanction given by Him to Christian Communities—that their authority therefore comes direct from the Society so constituted, in whose name and behalf they act, as its representatives, just to that extent to which it has empowered and directed them to act. These views do indeed leave them a most awfully important and dignified office, as servants in 'the House of God'—(the 'Temple of the Holy Ghost')—as stewards (*i.e.* dispensers; *οἰκονόμοι*) of Divine truth to His people, and as messengers from Christ (so far as they 'set forth His true and lively Word, and duly administer His Holy Sacraments') as having been appointed conformably to His will. But although their title is thus placed on the secure basis of a clear Divine sanction given, once for all, to *every* regularly-appointed minister of any Christian Community constituted on Gospel principles, instead of being made to depend on a long chain, the soundness of many of whose links cannot be ascertained, yet this last is a system more flattering to human weakness; inasmuch as it represents the Priesthood as comparatively independent of each particular Church, and derives their Church's authority rather from *them*, than theirs from it.

And accordingly so strong is the prejudice in the minds of many persons in favour of this system, that to

Series) *on Vicarious Religion.* See also a *Lecture delivered at the Dublin Law Institute, on the Moral and Intellectual Influence of the Professions;* since reprinted in the *Elements of Rhetoric.*

rest the claims of a Christian *ministry* on the basis of the *Divinely-sanctioned* institution of a Christian *Church*, would appear to them to be making the ministry altogether a *human* ordinance; though in truth its claim to be a Divine ordinance rests on that very sanction: so completely do they lose sight of the whole character of a *Church*, and of a *Community*.

Claims of Christian *ministry* based on those of a Christian *Church*.

I remember seeing a censure passed on some one who had presumed to appoint another as a Bishop, not on the ground (which would have been a very just one) of his having no authority from any Church to make the appointment, but on the ground of his not being *himself* a Bishop; for how—it was urged—can a spring rise above the level of its source? how can an individual appoint another to an ecclesiastical office higher than he himself holds? How indeed—it might have been added—can *any* individual, whether Bishop or not, appoint another to *any* office—high or low—unless *authorised* by the *Community* to do so? For an individual to pretend to create another a king, or a magistrate of any other description, or the humblest civil functionary—even though he were himself a king—*without lawful authority from the Community to make such appointment*, would be regarded as a most extravagant and absurd assumption. On the other hand, a *Community*, and consequently those acting under its sanction, *may* appoint a man to an office higher than is possessed by any of the individuals who perform that act; as is the case, for instance, in the election of a *member of Parliament*. And, in the case of the supposed shipwrecked emigrants above adverted to, no reasonable man could doubt their right to elect one of their number as their King. But in the case of *ecclesiastical* Communities, many persons are found to advocate that fanciful and groundless system which goes to deprive *these* of all the rights which Christ's sanction of such a Community confers.

For, according to this system, the sacramental virtue

of Holy Orders, which is indispensable for all the Christian ordinances and means of grace, is inherent indefeasibly in each individual, who has derived it, in no degree from any particular Community, but solely from the Bishop whose hands were laid on him; who derived *his* power to administer this sacrament, altogether from Consecration by another Bishop —not necessarily a member of the same particular Church, but obtaining his power again from another Bishop; and so on, up to the apostolic times. On this system the Church is made a sort of appendage to the Priesthood; not the ministry to the Church.[1] A people separated from their ministers by some incurable disagreement as to Christian doctrine, even supposing these last to have occasioned it by an utter apostasy from Gospel-truth—would be left (supposing they could not obtain other ministers qualified by the same kind of transmission of sacramental virtue) totally and finally shut out from the pale of Christ's Universal Church, and from his 'covenanted mercies'; while the ministers, on the contrary, though they might be prohibited by civil authority, or prevented by physical force, from exercising their functions within a particular district, would still, even though antichristian in doctrine and in life, retain their office and dignity unimpaired—the sacramental virtue conferred on them by ordination, and the consequent efficacy of their acts undiminished.

Error of making the authority of a Church emanate from that of its ministers.

§ 39. And this is not merely an inference fairly de-

[1] That pernicious popular error which confounds the Church with the *clergy* (see note § 33), as if the spiritual Community consisted only of its officers, is partly kept up perhaps by men's neglecting to notice one peculiarity belonging to Christ's kingdom, at its first *establishment;* viz. that it did, then, consist of ministers only, though it was by no means designed so to continue. *All* the Disciples who constituted the infant Church were those destined to be employed in various offices therein: so that an inattentive reader is liable to confound together what our Lord said to them *as ministers*, and what as *members;*—as rulers of a Church, and as the Church itself.

ducible from the principles of the system. One may even find persons who acknowledge that, if a Bishop, of our own Church for instance, who had been, for some crime, removed and degraded by regular process, should think proper afterwards to ordain men priests or deacons, though he and they would be legally punishable, still his ordination would be valid, and these men consequently (however morally unfit) real clergymen, capable of exercising the spiritual functions. This is to recognise a fearful power, and that, placed in the very worst hands, of producing and keeping up Schism with something of an apparent Divine sanction to give it strength.[1] For on this principle, a Bishop of some other Church—the Roman Catholic for instance, or the Greek—who should have been ejected from his diocese, might take upon him to ordain men according to the rites of *our* Church, and we should be bound to recognise his ordinations as valid.

Case of deposed Bishops and Presbyters.

I need hardly remark that, according to the principles I have been endeavouring to maintain, a Bishop when removed from his diocese (whether for any crime or otherwise) and not appointed to any other, though he may continue a member of the episcopal *Order* (unless regularly removed from it by competent authority[2]), ceases altogether, *ipso facto*, to be a Bishop, in respect of episcopal *functions;* and has no more right to ordain, or to perform any other act, in the capacity of a Bishop, than a layman would have; that is, till the same or some other Christian Church shall think proper to receive him in that capacity.[3]

[1] See above, § 32.

[2] For it is evident that as, in respect of Church regulations, the powers of 'binding' and of 'loosing' have, equally, the Divine sanction, so, the power of any Christian Church to *admit* any one (either simply into the number of its *members*, or) into any particular *Order* or Office, implies a power to *remove* him from either, when the case shall be such as to call for his removal.

[3] For a Bishop, it should be observed, does not, in becoming such, enter on a new *profession* (as he did on taking Orders), but only on a new description of *Office* in his profession. A person

If indeed any Church should be so very unwise as to recognise as clergymen persons ordained by a deprived Bishop, these would undoubtedly be ministers of that Church; because *that* recognition would constitute them such; and a Christian Community has power (though in that case there would be a gross abuse of its power) to determine who shall be its officers. But what I am contending against is, the notion of an inherent, indefeasible, sacramental virtue conveyed by the imposition of hands, and giving validity to the official acts, regular or irregular, of the persons possessing it. And this does seem to me a most pernicious as well as groundless tenet, tending to destroy the rightful authority of a *Church*, by unduly exalting the pretended privileges of its functionaries.

On the same principle which has been now set forth in respect of Bishops, the acts of a Presbyter, or deacon, or other minister, of any Church, cease to be valid as soon as ever the Christian Community in which he was appointed withdraws its sanction from his acts. If another Church think fit to receive him as a minister, they have an undoubted right to do so; and he then becomes a minister of that Church. So he does also when *not* expelled from the Society to which he originally belonged, supposing the Church to which he transfers himself *thinks fit to recognise* the ordinations of the other; which they may do or refuse to do, entirely at their own discretion. This is a point which every Church has a full right to determine according to its own judgment.

And as for the individual himself who is regularly deprived by his Church, if, on becoming a clergyman, he engaged (as is required by, I believe, most existing Churches) that he would follow *no other* profession,[1]

may indeed, as I have said, continue to belong to a certain *Order* of clergy, though with suspended functions; but the important point to be insisted on is, that no *official acts* have any validity but what is *derived from the Community* to which, in each case, the officer belongs.

[1] It would be, I am convinced, very advantageous that this rule should be modified as regards *deacons*. We might avail ourselves

of course he cannot absolve himself from that engagement; but must continue so far a clergyman, though with suspended functions. Moreover a Church has a *right*—though I think such a regulation a very unwise one—to recognise as valid the acts of a degraded minister (while subjecting him nevertheless to penalties for performing such acts) or of a layman.

Conditions of ordination imposed by a Church.

Concerning several points of this class—such as the validity of lay-baptism, or of baptism by heretics or schismatics, etc.—questions have been often raised, which have been involved in much unnecessary perplexity, from its being common to mix up together what are in fact *several distinct questions*, though relating to the *same subject*. For instance, in respect of the validity of lay-baptism, three important and perfectly distinct questions may be raised, no one of which is answered by the answering, either way, of the others: viz., 1st. What has a Church the *right* to determine as to this point? 2ndly. What is the *wisest* and best determination it can make? and, 3rdly. What *has* this or that particular Church *actually* determined? Now persons who are agreed concerning the answer to one of these questions may yet differ concerning the others, and *vice versâ*.[1]

Confusion of the questions, what a Church *may* do, *ought* to do, and *has* done.

§ 40. But to return to the consideration, generally, of the whole system of what is called 'Catholic Tradition,' etc., which I have been censuring; it is calculated, as has been said, to produce at the first glance a striking and imposing effect, and to recommend itself strongly

of the services of some very useful assistants, if we would admit to this subordinate office some who could not maintain themselves wholly without resorting (as the Apostle Paul did) to some secular employment. That some such distinction was in the view of the framers of our *ordination services* for deacons and for priests will, I think, appear probable to any one who attentively examines those services in reference to this point.

[1] Hooker, in his 5th Book, maintains at great length the validity of baptism by laymen and women.

to the imagination and the feelings of some persons: but will not stand the test of a close examination. The advocates of these doctrines, accordingly, either from a consciousness of this, or else from indistinctness in their own conception, often set them forth with something of oracular obscurity and ambiguity, half concealed behind a veil, as it were, of mystery; as something of which the full import and complete proof were to be reserved for a chosen few. And when clear evidence is demanded of a sufficient foundation for the high pretensions put forth, and the implicit submission demanded, we are sometimes met by a rebuke of the 'pride of human intellect,' and of the presumptuous expectation of having everything that we are to believe made perfectly level to our understanding, and satisfactorily explained.

System of Traditionists incapable of being supported by clear arguments.

No one, it may be said, would believe in a God, if he were to insist on first obtaining a clear and full comprehension of the nature and attributes of such a being; an explanation—such as no man of sense would think of giving or of seeking—of the Divine attributes, brought down to the capacity of such a being as Man. Nor would any one believe in the Christian Revelation, if he were to require, previously, to have a clear and full comprehension of the mysteries of the Incarnation, of the Redemption, of the Trinity, and of everything else appertaining to the Gospel-scheme. We must content ourselves, therefore, we are told, with faint, indistinct, and imperfect notions on religious subjects, unless we would incur deserved censure for want of faith.

What things one may, and may not, demand to have explained.

How often and how successfully the fallacy here sketched out has been employed, is really wonderful considering how totally different and entirely unconnected are the two things which are thus confounded together; the clear or indistinct notion of the *subject-matter* itself—of the fact or proposition—that is before us; and, the clear or indistinct notion of

Clear or faint apprehension of the evidence, and of the subject of it, not to be confounded.

the *evidence* of it—of the reasons for believing it. A moment's reflection is sufficient for any one to perceive the difference between the two; and yet, in the loose language of careless or sophistical argument, they are continually confused together, and spoken of indiscriminately, as if they were the same thing.

Every one, whether possessing Christian faith or not, believes firmly—and must believe—and that, on the clearest evidence—in the existence of many things concerning which he has but a very imperfect knowledge, and can form but indistinct and confused ideas of their nature; while to believe in whatever is proposed to us without any *clear proof* that it is *true*—with an imperfect and indistinct apprehension of any *reason* for believing it—is usually regarded as a mark of credulous weakness. And, on the other hand, some description, narrative, or statement, may be, in itself, perfectly clear and intelligible, and yet may be very doubtful as to its truth, or may be wholly undeserving of credit.

For instance, there is, I suppose, no one who seriously doubts the existence of something which we call Soul —or Mind—be it Substance or Attribute, material or immaterial—and of the mutual connexion between it and the Body. Yet how very faint and imperfect a notion it is that we can form of it, and of many of its phenomena that are of daily occurrence! The partial suspension of mental and bodily functions during sleep —the effects of opium and other drugs, on both body and mind; the influence again exercised by volition, and by various mental emotions, on the muscles, and on other parts of the bodily frame, and many other of these phenomena, have exercised for ages the ingenuity of the ablest men to find even any approximation towards but an imperfect explanation of them. Yet the *evidence on which we believe in the reality* of these and of many other things no less dimly and partially understood is perfect.

On the other hand, the characters, transactions, etc. represented by dramatic writers, or described by historians, are often as *clearly intelligible* as it is possible

for anything to be; yet from the total want of evidence, or from the want of clear and decisive evidence, as to their *reality*, we regard them as either entire fictions or mixtures of fable and truth, or as more or less likely to have actually existed.[1] The character and conduct of Lear, for instance, or Othello, of Hamlet, and Macbeth, are perfectly intelligible; though it is very doubtful how far the tales which suggested to Shakespeare the idea of most of his dramas had any foundation in fact, or were originally fictitious. Many again of the orations recorded by the ancient Greek and Roman historians are as easily and plainly to be understood as any that are reported in our own times; but in what degree each of these is a faithful record of what was actually spoken is a point on which we have, in some cases, a slight and imperfect evidence, and in others none that deserves the name.

§ 41. In all subjects where religion is not concerned, no one of ordinary good sense ever confounds together two things so dissimilar and unconnected as those I have been speaking of. But in what pertains to religion the fallacy is, as I have said, often introduced. Yet religion does not, in this respect, really differ from other subjects.

Fallacies resorted to on religious subjects.

Our Saviour's character and His teaching were matter of wondering perplexity to all around Him; even in a far greater degree than after the establishment of His Kingdom, on His personal ministry being completed; both because the Jews were full of the expectation of a totally different kind of Deliverer, and because great part of His discourses were not even designed to be fully intelligible, at the time, to His own Disciples; but to be explained afterwards by the occurrence of the events He alluded to. Some of His followers, accordingly, 'went back and walked no more with Him,' on the

Character of Christ's religion imperfectly understood; *evidence* of it clear.

[1] See *Rhetoric*, part i. c. 2, § 2: 'On the plausible and the historically probable.'

occasion of one of these discourses. But the Apostles, who adhered to Him, did so neither from having any clearer notions concerning His revelations (for we often find it recorded that 'they understood not this saying,' etc.), nor again, from being satisfied to believe without any clear proof of His high pretensions; but because they 'believed, and were sure that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God,' on such evidence as He had Himself appealed to: 'the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.' Dim, and indistinct, and imperfect as were still their notions (as, to a great degree, ours must be also) concerning 'the Son of God,' it was no indistinct or imperfect evidence on which they believed that He *was* so.

Character and pretensions of the false Christs, readily understood: evidence wanting.

A converse case is that of the several false Christs who afterwards arose. 'I am come,' says our Lord, 'in My Father's name' (with such manifestations of Divine power as testified His coming from God), 'and ye receive Me not; if another come in His own name' (viz. requiring acceptance on his own bare word, without any miraculous credentials) 'Him ye will receive.'[1] *Their* teaching, their pretensions, and promises were as clearly intelligible to the greater part of the Jews—because falling in with the prevailing belief and expectations—as those of Jesus had been (even to His own Disciples) obscure, perplexing, or unintelligible. Accordingly, vast multitudes followed these pretenders, without requiring any clear and sufficient evidence of the *truth* of their pretensions: and they followed them to their own and their country's ruin.

The very history of our religion, therefore, supplies us here with an illustration of the distinction I have been speaking of. On the one side we have a revelation, itself dimly and partially understood, and doubtful, in great part, as to its *meaning*, but with clear *evidence* that it really came from God: on the other, a pretended

[1] See Sermon on the *Name Emmanuel*: and also Cruden's *Concordance* on the word 'Name.'

revelation, containing, to those it was proposed to, no doubts or difficulties as to its sense and its design, but supported by no evidence that could satisfy an unprejudiced mind, bent on the attainment of truth.

§ 42. However plausible then the system I have been objecting to may appear to any one—however imposing and mysteriously sublime—however gratifying and consolatory to the feelings, let him not thence neglect to inquire for the proofs by which its high pretensions are to be sustained; but rather examine with more care the foundation on which so vast a superstructure is made to rest. Let no one be deterred from this by fierce denunciations against the presumptuousness of all inquiry, and the profaneness of all use of private judgment in religious matters; and by eulogies on the virtue of faith; but let him remember that the '*faith*' thus recommended is precisely that *want of faith* for which those Jews just mentioned were so severely condemned. They refused to listen to good evidence, and assented to that which was worthless. False views of what is faith.

And let no one allow himself to be persuaded that he is evincing an humble piety, acceptable to the '*jealous* God,' in hastily giving credence to the pretensions to Divine authority put forth in behalf of uninspired men (not producing the miraculous 'Signs of an Apostle') by those who are for blending 'Tradition with Scripture,' and 'following the dictates of inspiration wherever found, whether in Scripture or Antiquity'; and to pronounce according to their own arbitrary choice, what are and what are not the General Councils whose 'deliberations were overruled by the Holy Spirit, and their decrees consequently authoritative.' Danger of misdirected piety.

'If any of these entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go after other Gods, thou shalt not hearken unto him.' And those who speak in the name of Jehovah, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken,' are no more exempt from the guilt of enticing to idolatry than the worshippers of Baal.

The more disposed any one is to submissive veneration, the greater the importance of guarding him against misdirected veneration—against false piety—against reverencing as Divine what in reality is human. And the more awfully important any question is, the greater is the call for a rigid investigation of what may be urged on both sides; that the decision may be made on sound, rational, and Scriptural grounds, and not according to the dictates of excited feelings and imagination.

Use of terms opposite to the things designated.

And in these times especially, and in respect of this subject, men need to be warned against a mistake which at all times is not uncommon—that of allowing themselves to be misled by names and professions, which are often—apparently by designed choice—the most opposite to the things really intended. Thus, for instance, the term 'Apostolical' is perpetually in the mouths of some who the most completely set at nought the principles which the Apostles have laid down for our guidance in the inspired Writings, and who virtually nullify these by blending with them the traditions of uninspired men. None more loudly censure the 'pride of human intellect,' and inculcate 'pious humility,' than those who are guilty of the profane presumption of exalting fallible Man to a level with God's inspired messengers, and of deciding how far they shall impart, or 'reserve,' the truth which God has revealed. The evils of 'Schism' again are especially dwelt on by some who maintain principles the tendency of which has been shown to be to generate and perpetuate Schism. To satisfy and 'settle men's minds,' is the profession of some, whose principles lead (as has been above marked) in proportion as each man has the most tender conscience, and the greatest anxiety about religious truth, to perplex and torment him with incurable doubts and scruples. 'Church-principles' again is a favourite phrase with some who are, in fact, lowering the just dignity and impairing the Divinely conferred rights of a Church. By none is a professed veneration for the 'episcopal Office' carried to a more extravagant height than by some who

are the most daring in usurping for themselves the government of the Church, and who set at nought with the greatest contumely every Bishop who ventures to disagree with them. And none more loudly profess devoted and submissive admiration for the 'Anglican Church' than many of those who are emphatically opposed, in some of the most important points, to the principles on which our Reformers proceeded, and the spirit which actuated them throughout.

If any one is deliberately convinced that those their fundamental principles are erroneous, and that they rested the doctrines and institutions of our Church on a wrong basis, he deserves credit at least for honest consistency in leaving its communion. But I know not how any one can escape the imputation of very lax notions of morality who continues to retain his position in our Church, and speaks with bitterness of those not in communion with it, while he opposes the principles, and even vilifies the characters, of our Reformers.

Those hostile to the principles of the Church ought to withdraw from it.

§ 43. To me it does appear that—without attributing to those Reformers an infallibility which they expressly disclaim—we may justly give them credit for such sound views, and such resolute adherence to evangelical truth, combined with such moderation and discretion, as were—considering the difficult circumstances they were placed in—truly wonderful; and such as are, in all times, and not least in the present, well worthy of imitation. It was their 'wisdom to keep the mean' (as is expressed in the preface to the Book of Common Prayer) 'between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing and too much easiness in admitting any variation.' It was 'their wisdom' also to 'keep the mean' between the claims—never conflicting, except when misunderstood—of Scripture and of a Church. It was 'their wisdom' to keep the mean between a slavish bondage to ancient precedents on the one hand, and a wanton and arrogant

Principles of the Anglican Reformers.

disregard of them on the other. It was 'their wisdom' —their pious and Christian wisdom—to keep the mean between rash and uncharitable judgment of other Churches, and equally rash carelessness or fondness for innovation, in the regulations of their own. They conformed as closely as, in their judgment, circumstances would warrant to the examples of the earliest Churches, without for an instant abandoning the rightful claims of their own; and yet without arrogantly pronouncing censure on those whose circumstances had led *them* to depart farther from those ancient precedents. Their 'Faith' they drew from the Scriptures; their 'Hope' they based on the Scriptures; their 'Charity' they learned from the Scriptures.

A member of the Anglican Church—I mean a sincere and thoroughly consistent member of it—ought to feel a full conviction—and surely there are good grounds for that conviction—both that the reforms they introduced were no more than were loudly called for by a regard for Gospel truth, and that the Church, as constituted by them, does possess, in its regulations and its officers, 'Apostolical Succession,' in the sense in which it is essential that a Christian Community *should* possess it; viz. in being a regularly-constituted Christian Society, framed in accordance with the fundamental principles taught us by the Apostles and their great Master.

Successors of the Apostles.

Successors in the apostolic office, the Apostles have none. As *personal attendants* on the Lord Jesus, and *witnesses* of His *Resurrection*,[1] as *dispensers* of *miraculous* gifts—as inspired *oracles* of Divine *Revelation*—they have no successors. But as *members*—as *ministers*—as *governors*—of Christian Communities, their successors are the regularly-admitted members—the lawfully-ordained ministers—the regular and recognised governors—of a regularly-subsisting Christian Church; especially of a Church

[1] 'Last of all, He was seen of me also,' says Paul (1 Cor. xv. 8), probably at the time referred to in Acts xxii. 17; which was most likely when sent from Antioch to Jerusalem (Acts xi. 8), just before his ordination as Apostle.

which, conforming in fundamentals, as I am persuaded ours does—to Gospel-principles, claims and exercises no rights beyond those which have the clear sanction of our great Master, as being essentially implied in the very character of a Community.

May the members of a Church which our Reformers cleansed of so much corruption, and placed on its true basis, have the grace to profit by their example, and follow out their fundamental principles; labouring to be apostolical 'not in mere words and in tongue, but in deed and truth'; actuated by the same spirit which was found in those great and good men, so far as they decreed what is agreeable to God's word, and to the 'pure and peaceable wisdom that is from above.' And especially may all who profess Church-principles be careful to guard themselves and others against the two most prevailing errors of these days—the two kinds of encroachments on the legitimate rights of a Church; on the one side by presumptuous and self-sufficient irregularities, and defiance of lawful authority; and by the pretensions of supposed 'Antiquity' and 'Tradition' on the other; that they may be enabled, under the Divine blessing, to carry into effect more and more fully and to bring to completion 'all the holy desires, all the good counsels, and all the just works' of our Reformers, and of all other our predecessors, as many as have endeavoured, in simplicity and truth, to conform to the instructions of our Divine Master and His Apostles.

Duty of members of our Church.

APPENDIX.

ANGLICAN DIVINES AND APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

The following quotations from the writings of prominent Anglican theologians of recent times show very clearly the opinion of the most eminent historical writers of the Church in the later nineteenth and present centuries. With the exception of the passages from the works of Dr. Harnack and Dr. Hauck—who occupy outstanding positions among contemporary students of Christian origins—all the extracts are written by Anglicans. In parallel columns will be found contrasted the manner in which the Rev. A. W. F. Blunt deals with the position of non-episcopal churches and the consequences that arise from the *a priori* conceptions of Bishop Gore in considering the condition of Presbyteral Christianity. Facts in early Christian history are frankly faced by the writers quoted, and the present state of Evangelical Christianity shows clearly that the traditional standpoint of Anglican theologians that Episcopacy is of the *bene esse* and not of the *esse* of Christianity is in accord with the teaching of the New Testament and the practice of early Church history. . . . Archbishop Laud, in his argument against Fisher, summed up the entire position when he wrote, "Most evident it is that the succession which the Fathers meant is not tied to place or person: but it is tied to verity of doctrine" (Against Fisher, Cardwell's Edition, see pp. 320-27).

REV. A. W. F. BLUNT, SOMETIME FELLOW AND CLASSICAL LECTURER OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." This is after all, as we have seen, St.

THE RIGHT REV. C. GORE, LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

I revert, then, to what is, I believe, "the fundamental religious principle of the whole Reformation movement," *viz.*, the repudiation of the conception

Paul's own final test. In his view the principal and convincing sign that his ministry was of Divine ordination, was its production of Christian fruit. And surely this is ultimately the only worthy conception of a Divinely ordained ministry. A Divine society can live neither upon its past history nor upon its present externals. A Christian Church cannot safely base its claims upon any unspiritual hypothesis of mechanically transmitted grace, especially when those hypotheses are artificial and destitute of proper historical foundation. When an historic system continues, or begins again, to perform its functions adequately, it is a real sin to promote or perpetuate any violent dislocation from that system; the advantages of novelty cannot compensate for the disadvantages of unnecessary, or unnecessarily protracted schism. But the test of "results" in the widest sense of the word is the final test, whether a system shall continue to be regarded as Divinely ordained, or whether we must infer that the Providence which that authority to minister is given in the Church only by devolution from above on the principle of succession to the original apostolic ministry. I believe that in repudiating this principle the Reformed Churches were—with whatever excuse—repudiating a law of Divine authority in the Church, and also an essential principle of the Church's continuous life.

We must recognize that upon the basis of this rebellion there have arisen Christian Churches with a noble and continuous record of spiritual excellence, exhibiting, both in individuals and corporately, manifest fruits of the Spirit alike in learning, in virtue, and in evangelical zeal. To deny God's presence with them, and His co-operation in their work and ministry, would seem to me to approach to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. We cannot express in words too strong our assurance that God has been with them, and that we are meant to learn from their saints and teachers, and to sit at their feet as before those who possessed God's spirit.

established it is also superseding it. The real grace of a ministerial system is the grace of useful Christian leadership and service. The true Apostolic succession in the Church resides in the Church life, and not in the Church officials, except as commissioned organs of Church life. "The Christian society is prior to the individual; and continuity of its vital relation to Christ depends on the persistence of the facts of Church life" (*Studies in Apostolic Christianity*, pp. 119-20).

And if I am asked how I can explain this on my own principles, which compel me to regard them as rebels against a Divine law, I would answer that they were not only rebels against a Divine law; they were vigorously and bravely vindicating Divine principles at the same time. And the principles which they were vindicating, especially the principle of the supremacy of Scripture in the Church against the corruption of tradition, and the principle of human liberty against spiritual tyranny, are such Divine principles—are principles so certainly Christian—that when the vindication of these principles carried them on, in some cases regretfully and under the pathetic plea of necessity, even to the neglect of a fundamental and Divine law of Christian fellowship, the Apostolic Succession, I cannot even so forget what they were vindicating. It is upon their vindication of true principles—upon their passionate love of Scripture and their strong claim for spiritual liberty—that I seem to see the Divine blessing resting (*Orders and Unity*, pp. 183-85).

The Late Rev. Canon Bigg, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Oxford.

The vexed question as to the origin of the episcopate has been touched upon in the chapter upon Clement of Rome. We have seen also the views of Ignatius and Irenæus on the power and necessity of the office. The veneration with which the office of the bishop was regarded is best shown by the trivial fact that Polycarp had never been allowed to take his shoes off, the brethren re-

garding it as a high privilege to perform for him any kind of menial service. Whether as yet (close of second century) the bishop received any special consecration is matter of inference. Jerome believed that until late in the third century the Bishop of Alexandria was made by the priests of that diocese. In *The Canons of Hippolytus*, a document which probably belongs to the early years of the third century, it is directed that the bishop, having been elected by the people, shall be consecrated in prescribed form by "one of the bishops and presbyters"—an obscure phrase which may mean "by a bishop *and* a presbyter," or less likely "by a bishop *or* a presbyter". About the middle of this century we read that Novatian was consecrated at Rome by three bishops, and this is the Nicene rule. Here we have clear indication of development in the usage, but we are unable to say what was the exact practice in the first two centuries (*The Origins of Christianity*, pp. 263-64).

According to Jerome, therefore, Episcopacy was not directly instituted by our Lord, and it is clearly implied in his words that it was not directly instituted by the Apostles. It rests upon the "custom of the Church" and was devised by the Church for a particular object—the maintenance of unity. Jerome also asserts that in Alexandria down to the third century the bishop was elected, placed in office, and invested with his title by the priests. We can hardly doubt him to mean that the Bishop of Alexandria received from the priests all that was necessary for the discharge of his functions, including such consecration as was then in use. That statement of fact has been much disputed, but is not without serious corroboration. If it is not true, it is evident that we have here again nothing but Jerome's own inference from the original identity of the titles of bishop and priest (*The Origins of Christianity*, p. 66).

Rev. C. A. Briggs, D.D., Graduate Professor of Theological Encyclopædia and Symbolics in the Union Theological Seminary, New York.

There is agreement among recent historical critics of all parties that there is no record of the institution of

the diocesan-bishop in the New Testament. The only bishops of the New Testament are presbyter-bishops, and these are ever associated in a college or presbytery. Nowhere do we find a Church under the guidance of *one* of these presbyter-bishops. Hatch, Lightfoot, Gore, Sanday, Harnack, and Schaff are all agreed as to this point. Hence the battle-cries of all parties in the seventeenth century have happily disappeared in this new concord of historical criticism. There is no ecclesiastical organization now in existence that corresponds with the organization of the Church in the New Testament. Where do we find the independent Church with a single pastor and a bench of deacons of modern Congregationalism? Where do we find the ruling elders with a presiding parochial-bishop of modern Presbyterianism? Where do we find the diocesan-bishop with his subordinate priests and deacons of the Episcopal Churches? None of these are in the New Testament. All *jure divino* theories of Church government that base their orders on the authority of the New Testament are, if not yet buried, inanimate corpses, slain by historical criticism.

We have nothing more than ancient historic right for the historical episcopate. On the other hand, the theory that the parochial-bishop was a natural evolution of the college of presbyter-bishops; that it was inevitable that the college should have an executive head; and that with the growth of the Church, this presiding presbyter-bishop, who at first was temporary and changeable, or in the order of seniority, would become a permanent parochial-bishop, having the administration of the city committed to his hands, without any ordering of the Apostles and without any Divine institution; this theory accounts for all the facts of history as they appear in the ancient documents (*Church Unity*, pp. 83-85).

The Late Rev. N. Dimock.

I hope I have not overstated, I trust I have not desired to overstate, matters, or to misrepresent the attitude which certain modern opinions should consistently

have taken up in respect of the practice of an ancient Christian Church (Alexandria), and which was not, I believe, taken up by the Christianity of earlier centuries: or I would rather say—an attitude, the conscious absence of which, in the history of early Christianity, can hardly be accounted for except by a candid acknowledgment that the position which requires for a true Church that the succession must always and everywhere be traced through episcopal consecration is a position "very difficult indeed to maintain" (*Christian Unity*, pp. 14-15).

The Right Rev. T. W. Drury, Lord Bishop of Ripon.

It is argued that as Christ intended a continuous succession, and as that succession, so far as we can see, has always been maintained, therefore ministerial gifts, and even the grace of Christ's Sacraments, can only be assured to us by an *episcopally* ordained ministry.

From this mechanical theory we wholly dissent, on Scriptural grounds, historical grounds, and on our position as members of the Church of England. God's covenant of grace is clearly laid down in Scripture, and we cannot point to a single passage which even hints at any such condition of that covenant. We have, it is true, the two Sacraments, the Divinely appointed seals of the covenant, which none can without utmost peril wilfully reject. But it is nowhere stated that episcopal ordination is essential either to the Sacraments or to the covenant which they seal, or to the grace which they convey. God's grace is entirely free and untrammelled (*English Church Teaching*, p. 186).

Rev. H. M. Gwatkin, Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Cambridge.

The theory of an apostolic command is needless as well as unhistorical. Given that there was no apostolic command the other way, the spread of Episcopacy over the Churches in the second century is as easily accounted

for as the spread of despotism over Europe in the sixteenth, and by much the same causes. A heavy strain must have come upon the Churches, when the great apostles were cut off, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the rise of heresies seemed to usher in the last times. They had also their internal dissensions, for we may be sure from what we see in the New Testament that Corinth was not the only Church troubled with factions. Now that they could no longer refer their disputes to apostolic authority, the need of bracing up and strengthening the loose government which remained was visible and urgent. In such a case men always turn to monarchy. In the State, they appoint a dictator or invest the Government with fuller powers. In this case monarchical bishops were the strongest centres of unity the Churches could have, at a time when they evidently needed all the strength they could get. Episcopacy was plainly the strongest form of government; and if the last survivors of the apostles encouraged the drift in that direction, they did nothing else than common sense required. It was so clearly the right policy for that time that nothing short of an apostolic prohibition would have had any chance of checking it.

But what was the nature of the process? Was the bishop developed downward from the apostles, or upward from the presbyters, or did it arise in some third way? The first theory is quite untenable. The apostle's work, as we have seen, differs entirely from that of the bishop, and there is no evidence that he ever gave up his calling to become a bishop. The second will be in the main the true account—that one of the bishops became *the* bishop, while the rest remained simple presbyters. The bishop is as regularly connected with the presbyter-bishops of earlier times as he is sharply separated from the apostles. The change may in some cases have been sudden; but it was more likely gradual, and we know for certain that one Church made it after another, so that it cannot have been made in obedience to any general command. Thus, too, we can explain the easy transition to the new form of government, and the

naïve way in which most of the early teachers are called bishops by later writers. Many of them may have been bishops without having been monarchical bishops. Supposing, for example, that apostles made Polycarp one of the bishops at Smyrna, and that in course of time he attained an undisputed primacy among them, it would be an easy step, and not altogether a mistake, to say that they had made him bishop at Smyrna. And if this is not true of Polycarp, it may be true of others (*Early Church History*, vol. i., pp. 294-96).

Dr. Adolf Harnack, Berlin.

After giving his account of the development of the episcopate, Harnack writes: "If the account be compared with that given by Duchesne" (*Early History of the Christian Church*, pp. 62 ff.), "the difference is apparently extremely small, but that it is a significant one is shown by such a sentence as this on p. 66: 'Whether they (the Communities) had one bishop at their head or whether they had a college of several, the episcopate carried on the Apostolic Succession'. As regards the beginnings this is incorrect" (*Constitution and Law of the Church*, E. trs., p. 102).

Discussing the view of Theodore of Mopsuestia he says: "Even his primary contention, that the monarchical episcopate is rooted exclusively in the power of ordination, cannot stand, and depends on the point of view of a later period. If the power of ordination was the motive force which made a monarchical office out of a collegiate system, it must have been the rule from the beginning that on every occasion only one individual (and he a 'cleric') should appoint and consecrate. But this was not the case. From 1 Clem. xliv. it follows that men of repute (ἐλλόγιμοι ἄνδρες) in the community made the nomination, and obviously also appointed the individual approved by the community. This is supported by the *Apostolical Church Order*. 'Ordination' cannot by any possibility have originally played so important a part. But as it became more

important it may also have contributed to the development of the monarchical office. In theory the rule that the community chooses the bishop is not altered, and still finds expression in the examination to which the candidate had to submit, and the applause which signified the community's approval; but in actual fact the election of a bishop was probably a clerical affair as early as the end of the second century (*v.s.* pp. 103, 104).

"During the primitive period, during which the monarchical episcopate first began to develop—which lasted in certain provinces till Domitian and Trajan, and in many others still longer—a collegiate government of the individual Church, by means of bishops and deacons (or by means of a college of presbyters, bishops, and deacons), was normal. How she passed over into the other (*i.e.* monarchic control) we need not ask in this connection" (*Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, E. trs., vol. i., p. 481).

As the office (the Episcopate) grew to maturity, it seemed like an original creation; but this was simply because it drew to itself from all quarters both the powers and the forms of life (Harnack, *v.s.* p. 439).

Professor A. Hauck, Leipzig.

Over against the claims of the Gnostics that they had apostolic authority, either oral or written, for their preaching, were set these two standards (the Canon of Scripture and the Creed) by which alone the Apostolic character of any doctrine was to be tested (*cf.* Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, i., 10; iii., 3, 4; and Tertullian, *De Prescriptione Hær., passim*). But these standards proved inadequate to the emergency, for it was possible, especially by the use of the allegorical method, to interpret them in more than one way, and their apostolic origin and authority were not everywhere admitted. In view of this difficulty, it was claimed that the apostles had appointed the bishops as their successors, and that the latter were in possession of special Divine grace enabling them to transmit and to interpret without error the

teaching of the apostles committed to them. This is the famous theory known as "apostolic succession". The idea of the apostolic appointment of Church officers is as old as Clement of Rome (see I. Clement, xliv.), but the use of the theory to guarantee the apostolic character of episcopal teaching was due to the exigencies of the Gnostic conflict. Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.*, iii., 3 ff.; iv. 26, 33; v. 20), Tertullian (*De Prescriptione*, 32), and Hippolytus (*Philosophumena*, Bk. I., preface) are our earliest witnesses to it, and Cyprian sets it forth clearly in his Epistles (*e.g.*, *Ep.* 33, 43, 59; 66, 69). The Church was thus in possession not only of authoritative apostolic doctrine, but also of a permanent apostolic office, to which alone belonged the right to determine what that doctrine is. The combination of this idea with that of clerical sacerdotalism completed the Catholic theory of the Church and the clergy. Saving grace is recognized as apostolic grace, and the bishops as successors of the Apostles become its sole transmitters. Bishops are therefore necessary to the very being of the Church, which without them is without the saving grace for the giving of which the Church exists (*cf.* Cyprian, *Ep.* 33; *ecclesia super episcopos constituitur*, 66; *Ecclesia in Episcopo*, also *Ep.* 59, and *De unitate eccles.*, 17; *Ency. Britannica*, vol. 6, p. 335), (Art. "Church History," by Prof. Albert Hauck, Leipzig).

The Late Rev. F. J. A. Hort.

Of officers higher than Elders we find nothing that points to an institution or system, nothing like the episcopal system of later times. In the New Testament the word ἐπίσκοπος as applied to man, mainly, if not always, is *not* a title, but a description of the Elder's function. On the other hand, the monarchical principle, which is the essence of Episcopacy, receives in the apostolic age a practical though a limited recognition, not so much in the absolutely exceptional position of St. Peter in the early days at Jerusalem, or the equally exceptional position of St. Paul throughout the Ecclesiæ

of his own foundation, as in the position ultimately held by St. James at Jerusalem, and also to a limited extent in the temporary functions entrusted by St. Paul to Timothy and Titus when he left them behind for a little while to complete arrangements begun by himself at Ephesus and in Crete respectively.

In this, as in so many other things, is seen the futility of endeavouring to make the apostolic history into a set of authoritative precedents, to be rigorously copied without regard to time or place, thus turning the Gospel into a second Levitical Code. The apostolic age is full of embodiments of purposes and principles of the most instructive kind, but the responsibility of choosing the mean was left for ever to the Ecclesia itself, and to each Ecclesia, guided by ancient precedent on the one hand, and adaptation to present and future needs on the other. The lesson-book of the Ecclesia, and of every Ecclesia, is not a law but a history (*The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 232-33).

Rev. Chancellor Lias.

As for the theory that authority must in all cases be conferred from above, and cannot be imparted from below, the following considerations appear to cast some doubt upon it. There is no branch of the Christian Church in which the principle of authority is more paramount, and in which it is more strongly believed to have descended from above, and to be exercised under Divine guidance, than in the Church of Rome. Such authority is now believed to be vested in one person, namely, the Pope. Yet the Papal authority is not conferred by pope on pope, but is supposed to descend from on high on the person chosen by the cardinals. There would seem therefore, in the absence of any direct declaration of the Bible or the Church to the contrary, no valid reason why the episcopal office, possessing an authority far more restricted in its character, may not have been conferred upon the person chosen by Christian congregations to preside over them, in virtue of such

choice, and not of necessity by transmission from those who previously possessed it (*The Nicene Creed*, p. 354).

The Late Right Rev. J. B. Lightfoot, Lord Bishop of Durham.

The Kingdom of Christ, not being a kingdom of this world, is not limited by the restrictions which fetter other societies, political or religious. It is in the fullest sense free, comprehensive, universal. It displays this character, not only in the acceptance of all-comers who seek admission, irrespective of race or caste or sex, but also in the instruction and treatment of those who are already its members. It has no sacred days or seasons, no special sanctuaries, because every time and every place alike are holy. Above all it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the Divine Head. To Him immediately he is responsible, and from Him directly he obtains pardon and draws strength (*The Christian Ministry*, p. 1).

Asia Minor was the adopted home of more than one Apostle after the fall of Jerusalem. Asia Minor too was the nurse, if not the mother, of Episcopacy in the Gentile Churches. . . . But to the question how this change was brought about, a somewhat different answer than Rothe's must be given. We have seen that the needs of the Church and the ascendancy of his personal character placed St. James at the head of the Christian brotherhood in Jerusalem. Though remaining a member of the Presbyteral Council, he was singled out from the rest and placed in a position of superior responsibility. His exact power it would be impossible, and it is unnecessary, to define. When therefore after the fall of the city St. John with other surviving Apostles removed to Asia Minor and found there manifold irregularities and threatening symptoms of disruption, he would not

unnaturally encourage an approach by these Gentile Churches to the same organization which had been signally blessed and proved effectual in holding together the mother Church amid dangers not less serious. The existence of a council or college necessarily supposes a presidency of some kind, whether this presidency be assumed by each member in turn, or lodged in the hands of a single person. It was only necessary therefore for him to give permanence, definiteness, stability, to an office which already existed in germ. There is no reason for supposing that any direct ordinance was issued to the Churches. The evident utility and even pressing need of such an office, sanctioned by the most venerated name in Christendom, would be sufficient to secure its wide though gradual reception. Such a reception, it is true, supposes a substantial harmony and freedom of intercourse among the Churches, which remained undisturbed by the troubles of the times; but the silence of history is not at all unfavourable to this supposition. In this way, during the historical blank which extends over half a century after the fall of Jerusalem, Episcopacy was matured and the Catholic Church consolidated (*The Christian Ministry*, pp. 40-42).

If bishop were at first used as a synonym for presbyter and afterwards came to designate the higher office under whom the presbyters served, the episcopate properly so called would seem to have been developed from the subordinate office. In other words, the episcopate was formed not out of the apostolic order by localization but out of the presbyteral by elevation; and the title, which originally was common to all, came at length to be appropriated to the chief among them (*The Christian Ministry*, pp. 24-25).

The Late Rev. E. A. Litton.

The rite which the Church of Rome has transformed into a Sacrament conveying the grace of ordination, has

no title to that claim. Those whom the Apostles endowed, or found to be endowed, with the gifts for the work of the ministry, they laid hands upon, but principally when some special mission was in contemplation. The rite itself was a familiar Jewish one, used on a variety of occasions, and the general signification of which was a communication from a superior to an inferior. It was by no means appropriated to ordination. It was used in healing the sick, as when St. Paul laid hands on the father of Publius, and Ananias on Saul that he might receive his eyesight; by our Lord when He blessed the little children; under the Old Covenant when Jacob blessed the children of Joseph, and Moses devolved part of his office on Joshua. Even in the case of ministers it was not infrequently more than once administered to the same individual. Thus when Saul and Barnabas, who had long been engaged in preaching the Gospel, had a new field of labour assigned them by the Spirit, the "prophets and teachers" at Antioch laid their hands upon them with fasting and prayer, and sent them forth to their destination. So Timothy appears to have had hands laid upon him on two several occasions, once by the presbyters and a second time by St. Paul; but, by the rule of the Church, ordination with its "impressed character" cannot be repeated. On the whole, neither does a special rite for appointing ministers, nor special persons by whom alone that rite is to be administered, appear in the inspired record; still less the notion that a priestly virtue, qualifying the possessor to change (in whatever sense) the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, or to absolve from sin, was lodged in the Apostles, then to be transmitted to their so-called successors the bishops, and continued in a series to the end of this dispensation. And, be it repeated, this is what in Romanism and kindred systems is meant by the Apostolical Succession; apart from which it possesses little importance and no dogmatical value (*The Church of Christ*, pp. 233-35).

The Rev. Canon H. Rashdall.

We ought surely to be very careful about unchurching other Churches on the strength of what is, after all, merely a pious presumption. And then there is a very great difference between sanctioning the appointment of a permanent President of the Presbyteral College, and saying that such an institution was an essential part of the organization of any and every Christian Church, or insisting that no Presbyter could be considered a Presbyter unless he could trace his descent by laying on of hands, without break or intermission, to a bishop who was ordained by the Apostles themselves. Of this last notion there is not a trace for some centuries after the time of the Apostles (*Christus in Ecclesia*, pp. 113-14).

That we cannot trace a distinct order of bishops right back without interruption to the time of the Apostles in all parts of the Christian world, is now generally admitted by scholarly theologians (*v.s.* p. 117).

The Very Rev. J. Armitage Robinson, Dean of Wells.

It must suffice us here to say in conclusion that before the end of the second century, the long process of development had issued in a threefold ministry—a bishop, presbyters, and deacons—being at length generally recognized in all Christian Churches. In point of time, as well as of method, we have an exact parallel to this development both in the settlement of the canon and in the formulation of the Apostolic Creed. The more abundant literature of the end of the second century shows us a generally accepted standard of ministry, of canon and of creed. In each case the need of definiteness and of general uniformity had gradually made itself felt, and the Christian consciousness, guided and expressed by eminent leaders, had slowly solved the problems presented to it. In each case we have evidence of that

growth which is the prerogative and proof of life in the social as in the individual organism (Art. "Church," *Encyc. Biblica.*).

Rev. W. Sanday, D.D., Oxford.

We shall form a wrong idea if we think of the growth of the Christian ministry, with its accompaniments, after the manner of the framing of a written constitution in which certain leading principles are recognized from the outset and carried out in detail with logical precision. The Christian ministry, like most other administrative forms, rather grew than was made. And that by a process which if we could have seen it we should have described as quite simple and natural—though because natural it is not to be supposed that it is any the less providential (*Conceptions of Priesthood*, pp. 58-59).

Rev. Canon J. G. Simpson.

It is the merit of Augustine, in his handling of the Donatist controversy, to have pointed out the lines along which alone Apostolic Succession can be given its true place in the Christian economy. Machinery cannot be exalted at the expense of spiritual experience. Had the Eucharist, like Baptism, been a Sacrament incapable of repetition in the life of the individual, it cannot be doubted that the "validity" of "Schismatic" Eucharists would have been decided in the same sense as that of Baptism. Both Sacraments, as so administered, were equally regular or irregular according to the point of view. What may be called "the Channel theory" of Sacraments, which regards Christian ordinances as vehicles of grace down which spiritual energy may be led, has operated disastrously to produce a technical view of a succession equipped with the power of working the "miracle of the altar".

It is not affirmed that this theory is purely medieval, and that it was not present in germinal form in the first

five centuries, and possibly even in the Apostolic Church. But it is the view of succession as preserving the fullness of apostolic authority, and as the guarantee of a Gospel which is "not of man, neither by man,"—*i.e.* as realizing the principles upon which Christ established His society, that is alike primitive and permanent ("Apostolic Succession," Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, i., p. 641).

VERY REV. H. WACE, D.D., DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

Episcopal and priestly organization might be indispensable to the best welfare of the Church; and Melanchthon, in his signature to the Smalcaldic Articles, expressed his willingness even to recognize the Primacy of the Pope as a matter of human order, if only he would allow the Gospel to be preached. But for the salvation of individual souls, and consequently for the existence of a community of "those that were being saved," here and hereafter, neither pope nor bishop was essential. In the familiar language of English divines of the Stuart period, Episcopacy might be of the *bene esse*, but not of the *esse* of a Church (*Principles of the Reformation*, pp. 102-3).

THE LATE RIGHT REV. B. F. WESTCOTT, LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM, TO THE REV. J. LL. DAVIES.

BISHOP AUCKLAND,
June 26, 1899.

I cannot find any basis for the High Church theory in the New Testament. It is based, as far as I can see, on assumed knowledge of what the Divine plan must be. I had occasion to look through the New Testament not long ago with special reference to the question, and I was greatly impressed by a fact which seems to have been overlooked. All the apostolic writers are possessed (as I think rightly in essence) by the thought of the Lord's return, and they show no sign of any purpose to create a permanent ecclesiastical organization. Whatever is done is to meet a present need, as *e.g.*, the mis-

sion of Titus to Crete. The very condition laid down by the Apostolate excludes the idea of the perpetuation of their office. Is not this true? What followed when the Lord (as I think) did come is a wonderful revelation of the Providence of God. . . . (Bishop Westcott held very strongly that the Fall of Jerusalem was the coming which first fulfilled the Lord's words) (*Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Abridged Edition, p. 452).

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